


JESUS OUR IDEAL



W. P. WHALEY



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JESUS OUR IDEAL

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JESUS OUR IDEAL

BY
W. P. WHALEY, D.D.

*Author of "The Divinity within Us" and "What
Is the Matter with the Church?"*



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OUR IDEAL JESUS

W. B. WHALEY, D.D.

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TO THE READER

YOU will discover that these are very simple messages. They were prepared to enable ordinary people to see Jesus clearly enough to follow him. The aim is to bring Jesus so close that we can hear him speak and see him work. You will not think of him any more as a strange being, and you will not think of Christianity as an impossible life. Of course, Jesus is more than our ideal; but we are not thinking of that now. We are just following the plain Jesus of Nazareth around in Palestine in order that we may learn of him. You will discover that you are walking so close to him that you can often feel his presence. There is nothing so wonderful as to realize that. Please, sometimes, shut the book and close your eyes and try to touch the hem of his garment.

“Jesus, these eyes have never seen
That radiant form of thine;
The veil of sense hangs dark between
Thy blessed face and mine.

I see thee not, I hear thee not,
Yet thou art oft with me;
And earth hath ne’er so dear a spot
As where I meet with thee.

Like some bright dream that comes unsought
When slumbers o'er me roll,
Thine image ever fills my thought
And charms my ravished soul.

Yet though I have not seen thee, and still
Must rest in faith alone,
I love thee, dearest Lord, and will,
Unseen, but not unknown."

PINE BLUFF, ARK.

CONTENTS

I	PAGE
The Transforming Power of an Ideal.....	9
II	
Jesus the Ideal Child.....	22
III	
Jesus the Ideal Young Man.....	34
IV	
Jesus the Ideal Church Member.....	49
V	
Jesus Our Ideal in Temptation.....	61
VI	
Jesus Our Ideal in Opposition and Persecution....	75
VII	
Jesus Our Ideal in Service.....	87
VIII	
Jesus Our Ideal in Prayer.....	102
IX	
Jesus Our Ideal in Love.....	117
X	
Jesus Our Ideal in Optimism.....	129
XI	
Jesus Our Ideal in Death.....	138
XII	
Jesus Our Ideal in the Resurrection.....	149

I

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF AN IDEAL

"And all of us, reflecting the splendor of the Lord in our unveiled faces, are being changed into likeness to him, from one degree of splendor to another, for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." (2 Cor. 3: 18.)*

WORKMEN must have patterns, models, blueprints. Learners must have teachers. Those in training must have example. Those who aspire must have ideals. The kind of a house a man builds is mainly determined by the blueprints he follows. The scholarship a man attains is determined by the teachers he has. A man's efficiency depends upon his trainer. The character a man achieves is fixed by the ideal kept before him.

A box of tools and a pile of building material do not mean much to a man until he has the plan of a house in his mind. He could not build a house. Schools, libraries, and instructors are worth little to a man until he gets a

*On the whole, the New Testament quotations in this book are from Edgar J. Goodspeed's translation.

vision of the kind of scholarship he would like to attain—literary, technical, or professional. Does he wish to be a writer or speaker? Does he wish to be a mechanic of any kind? Does he wish to be a lawyer, preacher, or physician? His education and training will move toward and group around his vision of what he wishes to be.

A chisel and a block of marble mean nothing to the man who is not an artist. He can do nothing with either one. But put a chisel in the hands of a man who sees angels in stone, and roll a block of marble before him, and you are sure to get a beautiful piece of sculpture.

“Chisel in hand stood a sculptor boy,
With his marble block before him,
And his face lit up with a smile of joy
As an angel dream passed o’er him:
He carved the dream on that shapeless stone
With many a sharp incision:
With heaven’s own light the sculpture shone:
He had caught that angel vision.”

Both Jesus and the poets tell us that a man must build himself. All material things, all truth, and all spiritual grace are piled around us as building stuff. Out of this each of us is to build his soul. Some stand amid all this wealth of material and hear a voice saying, “All things are yours”; but they are confused

and do not know what to do. They have no vision of what they ought to be. So many do nothing—they do not build. Others select rather sorry plans, and the souls they build are a disappointment. Others have beautiful ideals, lay deep and solid foundations, and build great souls.

Jesus said that building a soul is like building a house. A certain poet said,

“Each man builds himself.”

Another poet said,

“Sculptors of life are we, as we stand
With our souls uncarved before us,
Waiting the hour when, at God’s command,
Our life dream shall pass o’er us.”

Still another poet passionately pleads:

“Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul.
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life’s unresting sea.”

To build as fine a house as the immortal soul of man is to be, each of us needs divine blue-prints, high ideals, inspiring visions.

An ideal is a “pattern,” an “example,” a

"standard," our highest conception of what a thing ought to be—that which is the most beautiful, the purest, the most perfect—that which grips and holds us with compelling power. There is not much difference between an ideal and an idol; for an idol is something a man worships, and we worship our ideals.

Our bodies become like the food we live on. We show in our faces and conduct the civilization of our country. A husband and wife who live happily together a long time come to look alike, think alike, and feel alike. We are all very like the chameleon, which is colored by the bush it is on.

Jesus said to his disciples, "I have set you an example, in order that you may do what I have done to you." Paul speaks of Jesus "as an example to those who would later believe in him and find eternal life." Peter speaks of Jesus as "leaving you an example so that you might follow his footsteps." Jesus says to all of us, "Learn from me." We cannot be Christians without Jesus Christ. We must see him, know him, appreciate him, love him, obey him, and be transformed by him who is the ideal man.

Jesus Christ is the ideal man. He does not belong to any one race, country, color, language, or age alone. He was born in Palestine,

but he is at home in every country. He was a Jew, but he is the ideal in all races. He was born two thousand years ago, but he is up to date in the twentieth century. He is both human and divine. He is the Son of Man and the Son of God. He was born on earth and he was born in heaven. He is equally at home in the material earth and in the spiritual heaven. He walks with men and with God. He talks with men and with God. He steps from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven.

Jesus is above criticism. At his first arraignment, Pilate said, "I find no fault in him." That has remained the verdict all down the ages. His Church has been criticized, the Bible has been criticized; but when the critics come to Jesus their criticisms cease, or they break forth into the most fervent praise. Some who have not seen their way clear to come into Christ's Church have said wonderful things about him. I am amazed at the following paragraph in a book written by one of the greatest Jewish rabbis, E. G. Enelow:

"Yet, these things apart, who can compute all that Jesus has meant to humanity? The love he has inspired, the solace he has given, the good he has engendered, the hope and joy he has kindled—all that is unequaled in human history. Among the great and the good that the human race has

produced, none has even approached Jesus in universality of appeal and sway. He has become the most fascinating figure in history."

Napoleon, who was neither weak-minded nor pious, had this to say of Jesus: "From first to last, Jesus is the same; always the same—majestic and simple, infinitely severe and infinitely gentle. Throughout a life passed under the public eye he never gives occasion to find fault. The prudence of his conduct compels our admiration by its union of force and gentleness. Alike in speech and action, he is enlightened, consistent, and calm. Sublimity is said to be an attribute of divinity: what name, then, shall we give him in whose character was united every element of the sublime? I know men; and I tell you Jesus is not a man. Everything in him amazes me. His spirit outreaches mine, and his will confounds me. Comparison is impossible between him and any other being in the world. He is truly a being by himself."

Thomas Carlyle exclaimed: "Jesus of Nazareth, our divinest symbol! Higher has the human thought not yet reached."

This greatest being of human history is set before us as the pattern of what God wishes all of us to be! "And he has given us some men as apostles, some as prophets, some as missionaries, some as pastors and teachers, in order to

fit his people for the work of service, for building the body of Christ, until we all attain unity in faith, and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and reach mature manhood, and that *full measure of development found in Christ.*"

One of the great certainties is that Jesus Christ does transform people. A real Christian looks like a man that had been remade, like one who had been born again! Old things have passed away, all things have become new, and the man walks in newness of life! Jesus took Saul of Tarsus and made Paul the apostle. He was so different from his old self that old friends disowned him and forsook him. He explained the change by saying, "The life I am now living in the body I am living by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

That process has been going on for two thousand years. There has never been another such a powerful ideal. No other ideal has remained so long and so steadily and so increasingly before men.

The text says a Christian reflects the splendor of the Lord in his face! Scientists declare that people in America are getting better looking. The more wholesome fare, the higher thinking, the cleaner living, the more spiritual aspirations, the diviner ideal among Christians ought to have that effect. Christ transforms a man's

country and his environment at the same time he is transforming the man. A vast and far-reaching transformation is needed in all non-Christian countries. A returned missionary said that *"what impressed him most when he got back to America wasn't the Woolworth building, not the autos, nor the radio, nor the aëroplane, not the wonderful hotels and churches and factories and machinery and other things, not the magnificent dresses, nor the beautiful young ladies in the dresses. It was the BEAUTIFUL OLD WOMEN of America. He says they don't have beautiful old women in heathen lands. They grow old young out there. You know what I mean. And when they grow old they grow ugly and unattractive, and cross, and everything. And why not? Vacant minds and unimproved hearts are good soil for ugly features."*

A beautiful statue stood in the market place of an Italian city. It represented a Grecian maiden of beautiful face, graceful form, and noble expression. One day a ragged, unkempt, slovenly girl came face to face with the statue. She gazed at it in wonder and amazement. She seemed entranced by it. It stirred long dormant instincts within her. She said to herself, "I may be like that, something within me tells me." She went home and washed her face and combed her hair. Next day she went and looked

at the statue again. She went away still further inspired. She washed and mended her tattered clothing. After that she went every day to gaze at the beautiful statue. Day by day she herself changed. She straightened up her shoulders, her spine lost its curve, her form grew more graceful, her face became more refined, until she did indeed become like the statue of the Grecian maiden.

That is what this text says is occurring in us if we keep Jesus constantly before us as an ideal. We follow him, we study him, we admire him, we love him, we try to do like he does, we try to think like he thinks, we try to feel like he feels, we try to be like he is. "We are being changed into likeness to him, from one degree of splendor to another."

We all remember Hawthorne's beautiful story of the Great Stone Face. On the almost perpendicular side of a great mountain some great natural upheaval had thrown a mass of gigantic broken rock. Seen at close range, there was no order or form noticeable; but at a great distance this mass took on the likeness of a great and wonderful human face. The arch of the forehead was a hundred feet high; there was a long and finely shaped nose; there were the deep-set eyes; and there were vast lips that looked like they might speak in tones of thunder. With

the enchantment that distance gives, wreathed in the thin vapors of the valley, and enlivened by the skillful light of the sun's rays, all these great features were magnificent and seemed thoroughly alive.

It was happy for children to grow up in that valley in the presence of that noble, grand, sweet, inspiring face. It was like an education to gaze upon it. One evening a mother and her little son named Ernest sat in the door of their mountain cottage gazing upon the Great Stone Face. The little fellow said, "If I could see a man with such a face I should love him dearly." The mother replied to him, "We may see a man sometime or other with exactly such a face as this."

Then she told him the old story that the winds and streams had told to the first Indians, which the Indians had told from generation to generation, and which had come on down to the white settlers—how sometime a child would be born in that rich valley, become the greatest and noblest of men, and have a face exactly like the Great Stone Face. The little boy exclaimed, "O mother, I do hope that I shall live to see him." The mother, though she considered the story a myth, did not wish to discourage so young a child. So she gathered him

fondly to her heart and said to him tenderly, "Perhaps you may."

Those words fell into the child's heart like a living seed of hope. He never forgot the story. Every day he gazed upon the Great Stone Face with this hope growing in his soul. He appreciated that face and adored that face more than anybody else had ever done. While he was a lad a rumor filled the valley that Mr. Gathergold, who was born in that valley and had been away many years, had gotten vast wealth and was coming back to build him a mansion in the valley. That looked like a fulfillment of the ancient prophecy. Surely he was the great and noble man who was to wear the image of the Great Stone Face. He came, but he was a disappointment to the valley. Ernest himself was disappointed, but he continued to gaze upon the magnificent picture upon the distant mountain.

In Ernest's early manhood another rumor spread over the valley. A young man born in the valley had gone away many years ago and had become a soldier and a great general. He was known far and wide as Old Blood and Thunder. He was returning to his native valley to spend his declining years. Surely he will be the fulfillment of prophecy and wear the image of the Great Stone Face. But he was another

disappointment—a greater disappointment to Ernest than to anyone else. But Ernest lived on in the hope that he should yet see such a man.

Still another rumor filled the valley. Old Stony Phiz, a famous statesman who was born in this valley, was coming through the valley in his campaign for the Presidency. The citizens hailed him with all the pride of their country and felt sure that they recognized in his face the magnificent features of the Great Stone Face. But they were ultimately disappointed; and Ernest, now growing old, was bitterly disappointed. However, he held on to his hope and studied day by day the great face on the mountain side.

His neighbors loved Ernest, respected him, went to him daily for advice and help, drank in his native philosophy, and regarded his godly example; but, having been with him all their lives, they were not aware of anything remarkable about him. But one day a great poet came into the valley. He was caught by the Great Stone Face. He heard of the mountain philosopher, Ernest, and went to see him. Sitting in the dooryard at Ernest's home, he gazed intently upon the Great Stone Face, then upon the noble face of Ernest. Leaving the home of Ernest, he went through the valley and

told the people that the old prophecy had been fulfilled. When the people asked, "Who is he?" he replied, "His name is Ernest." Then the people could see for themselves and knew that Ernest did indeed bear the very image of the Great Stone Face in whose presence he had lived, labored, and worshiped from childhood.

I wish you would come with me here each Sunday evening for a few weeks and let us look together upon the wonderful face of Jesus. Let us see him as he is, that we may be like him. I am sure that we will find him the great ideal in every imaginable situation.

II

JESUS THE IDEAL CHILD

"And he went back with them to Nazareth and obeyed them. And his mother treasured all these things up in her mind. As Jesus grew older he gained in wisdom and won the approval of God and men." (Luke 2: 51, 52.)

JESUS was born in Bethlehem, a small village a few miles south of Jerusalem. In order to save him from the murderous intentions of King Herod, the parents carried him into Egypt while still an infant. This Herod died in a year or two, and Joseph and Mary brought the child Jesus back to Palestine and settled in Nazareth, a small town about sixty miles north of Jerusalem. Palestine forms the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and Nazareth is only twenty miles from the sea. This is a hilly and mountainous country. Nazareth was twelve hundred feet above the sea, and between Nazareth and the sea there was a range of hills sixteen hundred feet above sea level.

Nazareth was a rather secluded town, though not far from a number of very important places. The country was under intense cultivation.

It was thickly populated. The fields and gardens were small. Fruits, vegetables, grain, and live stock were the products.

Joseph was a carpenter and had his shop in Nazareth. When Jesus was old enough to do that kind of work he became a carpenter also, and when Joseph died Jesus had charge of the shop for several years.

We are not told much about the childhood of Jesus, but the text tells us two beautiful things about it: first, Jesus grew like other children should grow; second, Jesus was obedient to his parents as other children should be. He is an ideal in the two essentials of childhood—growth and attitude toward parents.

Nazareth was not considered a cultured community. The people were regarded as crude. A question in other communities was, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" However, there was a church and there was a school. We know that Jesus had a "custom" of attending the church on the Sabbath; and it is supposed that he attended the school, which was taught by the minister in the church. If parents were living, children went.

Every community was supposed to have a week-day school taught in the church or some other provided place. No unmarried person was allowed to teach, because an unmarried

person was supposed to have an insufficient knowledge of children. A teacher could take only twenty-five pupils. If there were no benches, the children sat on the floor or ground. Children were started to school at six years. Instruction was mostly oral. There were no books. Scripture passages were written and used as lesson material. These passages were repeated aloud in singsong tones until memorized.

It was understood then, as now, that a child learns more in the first three or four years of his life than in all the rest of his after years. So the Jewish law required parents to teach and train their children from very infancy. At five years they began to memorize Scripture. Thus by the instruction of the parents and the drill in the day schools the Jewish children of Jesus's day were carefully and diligently taught the Old Testament Scriptures. Josephus, the great Jewish historian, says that when he was fourteen years old he was so well versed in the Old Testament law that the high priest sometimes consulted him.

When Jesus was twelve years old he went down to Jerusalem to the great Feast of the Passover. Perhaps this was his first trip to that great city. While down there he got separated from his parents and friends and

went to the temple. There he met some of the learned men of the Church—scribes. Asking them questions and answering their questions, he showed an amazing knowledge of the old Bible. He was a surprise to the great scholars at Jerusalem.

His parents, who had been separated from him three days, finally found him at the temple. When they expressed surprise at his lingering around the temple and the great teachers there, he asked them, "Did you not know that I must be at my Father's house?"

He did not mean any disrespect to his earthly parents. But the law was that a child became morally and religiously responsible at the age of twelve. Up to that time his parents were responsible *for* him. They offered prayer *for* him, made offerings *for* him, observed ceremonies *for* him—just as we take the baptismal vow *for* our children now; but at the age of twelve a Jewish child did all these things *for himself*. He became a full member of the Church with all the rights, privileges, and obligations of a Church member. So Jesus was just calling the attention of his parents to the fact that he was twelve years old and must assume his place and duties in the Church.

Certainly every child should become serious, thoughtful, prayerful by the time he is twelve

years old. He should become a Church member by that time, if not before, and take up the duties of a responsible Church member.

After this event at the temple the twelve-year-old Jesus went back to Nazareth with his parents and remained there until he was thirty years old. "He was subject unto them"—that is, he was an obedient boy, honoring his parents. That is what he had been taught from his infancy. The ten commandments every Jewish child would certainly know. "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This is the fifth commandment.

Paul said that this commandment is the "first commandment" for children. The first and most important duty of children is to honor and obey parents. Parents are "the vicegerents of God" to children. They stand in the place of God. Whatever God does for a little child he does through the parents. God puts the parents between himself and the little children. The faith a child must finally have in God he must have first in his parents, the love a child is finally to have for God he must first have for parents, the obedience which a child is finally to exercise toward God he must first exercise toward parents. Parents are

God's approach to the child and the child's approach to God.

The Christian religion is adapted to everybody, including the smallest children. We sometimes imagine that little children cannot be religious because they do not understand what religion is. Well, they do not understand the creeds of the Churches, they do not know the meaning of the Church vows grown people make, and they cannot do the religious duties grown people are supposed to do. They cannot teach, preach, pay money, lead in prayer, sing, and other such things. But a baby can live the Christian religion for a baby. A baby's Christian duty, "commandment," is to *honor and obey parents*. That is all the little child is asked to do. The first duty is the child's duty to father and mother. The first possible sin is to dishonor and disobey parents. And to sin against parents is to sin against God, for parents stand in the place of God to the child.

To honor and obey parents is worth as much to little children as obedience to other laws is to grown people. Children are good if they honor and obey parents, just as grown people are good if they do the duties of grown people. Disobedience to parents is sin for children just as disobedience to other laws is sin for grown people. Children are bad when they violate

the children's law just as grown people are bad when they violate the law for grown people. A child that honors and obeys parents in this way is a Christian child.

It is as important to be Christian in childhood as in manhood. We cannot imagine any reason for leaving the little child without moral and spiritual law. He is subject to all the other laws. If he falls, he is bruised or a bone is broken. If he eats the wrong thing, he is sick. If he is exposed to deadly disease, he dies. If his instruction is neglected, he grows up in ignorance. On the other hand, if he is properly fed and protected, he grows physically; and if he is carefully taught, he grows mentally. Evidently the baby and the small child are under physical and mental law. It is perfectly easy and natural to believe that he is under moral and spiritual law also. That moral and spiritual law is the commandment to honor and obey parents.

That is a very simple and very beautiful way to begin the Christian life, which is a life of eternal growth and attainment. If the little one is helped to live successfully the little child's religion, it will not be so difficult to live the religion of youth and manhood. If the first lessons in morals and spiritual life are neglected, the later lessons will be hard to

learn. As the physical and mental deficiencies of men are often traceable to a neglected infancy and childhood, so the moral and spiritual delinquencies are nearly always traceable to the same period. The recognized law for many centuries is, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The foundation of everything we would like to have in mature years must be laid in early childhood—health, intellect, righteousness, spirituality. "The child is father to the man."

We may have thought that the duty to honor and obey parents is based upon the facts that children derive their being from parents; are fed, clothed, and protected by parents, and are taught and loved by parents. Well, we should recognize these grounds of obligation, but the obligation is based ultimately upon our dependence upon God.

If children are to honor and obey parents because they are standing in the place of God to them, so parents are to discharge their duties to these little ones as the children of God. We are the children of God even in infancy and before we join the Church. Children are not the property of earthly parents, to be neglected, petted for selfish pleasure, or converted into slaves for our own profit. They are the im-

mortal children of God, put in our charge temporarily as a divine trust, to be taught, trained, and given their first impulse to eternal life. Parents are their schoolmasters to educate all the infant possibilities toward a full revelation of God. It would be a terrible sin for parents to be untrue to such a trust and allow these little immortals to grow up without a right notion of the Heavenly Father and without faith in him and love for him. It is a great privilege to be trusted with children, to stand in the place of God to them, and see them gradually come to a wonderful realization of their great Heavenly Father. Jesus says that a man had better have a stone hung about his neck and be thrown into the sea than to be untrue to one of these little ones. Parents are given the long period of eighteen to twenty-one years to do these wonderful things for the children intrusted to them.

There comes a time when earthly parents cannot longer stand in the place of God to their children. There comes a time when the first obligation is not to an earthly father, but to a Heavenly Father. Frequently a man is thrown into a situation where his higher obligation to God forces him to "leave father and mother." The period of the earthly father's control is over, and the Heavenly Father must

be obeyed, even though the will of the earthly father is against it. Even then the child should be sure that the will of his earthly father is not the will of his Heavenly Father; and if finally compelled to go against the will of the earthly father he should do so with the utmost respect and with a tender remembrance of all that the earthly father has meant to him.

The home life of Jesus was evidently ideal. Joseph and Mary were devout parents. The boy Jesus was obedient to them and honored them. They habitually attended the church services on the Sabbath. They went to Jerusalem to the great religious feasts. The child Jesus attended the week-day school and sat and studied with the other children of Nazareth. He passed through every phase of beautiful and wholesome childhood and developed so like other children that only his mother knew that he was different. An ancient writer says, "*He sanctified childhood by passing through it.*"

It is a wonderful thing that when the Son of God came into this world he took the form of a baby and grew up as a child. How he has honored childhood! I think he did it in order to show children how to be Christian children. I think he means for even little children to be Christians. People who do not become Christians until they are grown or old miss much of

Jesus. It is so fine to be first a baby Christian, then a child Christian, then a grown Christian, then an old Christian, then a Christian in heaven. To begin life just where Jesus did and follow him all through this world and through the next!. We need all of Jesus, and that is the way to get him.

Another reason I think Jesus wants the children to be Christians is that when he himself was a man and preaching his gospel he took great interest in children. He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." One day, when the disciples asked Jesus who was greatest in the kingdom of God, Jesus took a little child and set him in the midst of them and told them, "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." Again he told some people that it would be better for a man to have a stone hung around his neck and be thrown into the sea than to hinder or hurt one of these little ones. When Jesus made his last visit to Jerusalem, just before they betrayed him and crucified him, the children with others met him and sang, "Hosanna to the son of David"; and Jesus said that was a fulfillment of the prophecy, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."

There were Christian children in the Churches in Paul's day, because when Paul sent letters to be read to the congregations he sometimes put in messages for the children. When he wrote the letter to the Church at Ephesus he put in these words for the children: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which **is** the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth."

III

JESUS THE IDEAL YOUNG MAN

"Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his work." (Luke 3: 23.)

IT is a solemn thing to grow up to **manhood**. A child may talk like a **child**, think like a child, reason like a child, act like a child; but when he grows up to manhood **he must put away childish things**. There is nothing more attractive than a child. There is no more beautiful part of the path of life than that which winds through childhood. Our childhood was in the hands of those who loved us. They were responsible for us and worked for us. They even performed the religious rites and ceremonies for us. They made our first pledges to God. When **we** grew up *we* had to assume responsibilities, *we* had to take up tasks, *we* had to make our pledges to God. While we were children we were the tender charges of the home, the school, the Church, and the state. When we grew up we had to take charge of all these institutions.

Jesus grew up. He was the ideal child. We study him to-day as the ideal young man. I

know you have often wished for a fuller account of Jesus's young manhood. You have wondered why nothing is recorded about this remarkable young man from the time he was twelve years old until he was thirty. Eighteen years of the life of the most remarkable person the world has ever known did not get in the record! Why? First, I suspect there was nothing sufficiently remarkable about his life at Nazareth to attract the attention of a writer. He seems to have been a plain young man of the community. He was not a genius. He was not abnormal. If a man of letters had come to the little community looking for a character, perhaps he would have selected some other young man rather than Jesus. Second, if Jesus was an unusual young man in the community, there was nobody in his family or neighborhood capable of appreciating his superior qualities, except his mother. And she was not a writer. She "kept all these things in her heart."

I think Jesus was the ideal young man, because he did not try to impress his home town that he was something remarkable. Evidently he was modest, unassuming, quiet. Certainly he was not presumptuous and loud. He did not lead any "revolt of youth." Whatever consciousness he had of his own excellence, he contained himself. He did not make a spectacle

of himself on "fools' hill." He quietly and modestly subdued his rising spirit, identified himself with the ordinary young people, and was loyal to the older men who were charged with the responsibilities of school, Church, and state.

Then I think Jesus was the ideal young man because of his beautiful devotion to the little home at Nazareth. It is supposed that Joseph died by the time Jesus was grown and that Jesus became the head of the home and continued the carpenter's shop to support the home. Besides his mother, there were brothers and sisters in the home. We do not say that Jesus delayed his peculiar life work until his little earthly home could spare him; but it is interesting to know that he stayed with that little home until he was thirty years old and the younger members of the family were self-supporting. I think this is the finest testimony to the value, sacredness, and divinity of home that we have on record. No doubt all these years his mind was engaged with those great truths that he later preached. Already he had that world vision that none but he and his closest followers have ever had. His heart was already fervent with that compassion that finally cost him his life. How could such a young man stay with a cottage on a narrow lot

in a mean village? How could he who made the world and must save it busy himself with the small matters of an humble household? "Actions speak louder than words." During these eighteen years his daily conduct was the greatest of sermons on the sacredness of family relations. Since he has translated into deeds the gospel of mother, brother, and home, the most fitly chosen words on these subjects seem empty! Since Jesus provided daily for that little home for many years, how can we doubt that there is a divine providence over our homes?

Jesus loved that little home. That is another of the sacrifices he made when he entered upon his mission as Messiah. We do not know what disposition was made of the little house; but we know that his mother went with him much of the time during his three years' ministry, and we hear him saying pathetically, "Foxes have holes and wild birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head!" On the cross he thought of his homeless mother and asked John to take her to his house.

Another reason why I think Jesus was an ideal young man is that he was not afraid of work. After Joseph died Jesus kept the little workshop and came to be known in the town as "the carpenter." We have seen paintings of

Jesus standing at the work bench with his lumber and tools about him. Imagine that! Think of Jesus, the greatest figure in human history, taking up a kit of tools and going across the town of Nazareth to patch a roof! Think of his taking a contract to build a house in Nazareth, and after laying the foundation and putting up the frame the man who was having the work done found that he did not have money enough to complete the house! It was in Nazareth that he saw that houses built on sand would not stand, and that it was necessary to dig down to the rock for a solid foundation. Perhaps he tore down old barns for the prosperous farmers around Nazareth and built new and larger ones. He may have made the casket for the rich farmer who died so suddenly after harvesting an unusual crop. No doubt he did all sorts of jobs in the woodworking line.

“I wish I had been his apprentice, to see him each morning at seven

As he tossed his gray tunic from him, the Master of earth and of heaven.

When he lifted the lid of his work chest and opened his carpenter's kit,

And looked at his chisels and augers, and took the bright tools out of it,

To hear him say softly, ‘My helper, now bring me the level and rule’;

To have him bend over and teach me the use of the artisan's tool;

To hear him say, 'This is a sheep gate, to keep in the wandering flock,'

Or, 'This is a stout oaken house sill. I hope it will rest on a rock.'

And sometimes his mother might bring us our meal in the midsummer heat,

Outspread it so simple before us and bid us sit down and eat.

Then with both of us silent before him, the blessed Messiah would stop

To say grace, and tremulous glory would fill the Nazareth shop."

That makes the saw, hammer, square, and other carpenter tools seem sacred to me. When I see a carpenter I remember that Jesus was a carpenter too. I think of his contracts, of the good jobs he turned out, of the men that worked with him, of his wages, of how he spent his wages for the modest support of his mother and the younger children. Then I know Jesus understands the situation and problems of all carpenters and all laboring men. That is the reason that he makes a special plea to all laboring men and asks them to come to him. By actual experience of years he learned the laboring man's life, sympathizes with him, and makes him a special promise of help. All laboring men should turn to him as their best friend. If Jesus could afford to be a laborer, then a laborer can afford to be a Christian.

“Take, then, your paltry Christ,
Your gentleman God.
We want the carpenter’s son,
With his saw and hod.”

The Saviour who saves the home and sanctifies, ennobles, and dignifies work will be the Saviour of the world. Jesus faced all the problems of a lost world and attacked every one of them. He gave three years of *talk* to all the other problems and eighteen years of *work* to the problems of home and labor. If his gospel of example on the subjects of home and work should be obeyed by all men, there would be little else to do for the world’s complete salvation. With every man in the world standing by his home as Jesus stood by his, and every man in the world regarding his work and doing it as Jesus did his, conditions would be far on toward the ideal.

“But I think the king of that country comes out from
his tireless host
And walks in this world of the weary as if he loved it
the most:
For here in the dusty confusion, with eyes that are
heavy and dim,
He meets again the laboring men who are looking and
longing for him.

He cancels the curse of Eden, and brings them a
blessing instead.

Blessed are they that labor, for Jesus partakes of their bread;

He puts his hand to their burdens, he enters their homes at night;

Who does his best shall have as his guest the Master of life and light

And courage will come with his presence and patience return at his touch,

And manifold sins be forgiven to those who love him much:

And the cries of envy and anger will change to the songs of cheer,

For the toiling age will forget its rage when the Prince of Peace draws near.

This is the gospel of labor; ring it, ye bells of the kirk—
The Lord of Love comes down from above to live with the men who work.

This is the rose he planted, here in the thorn-cursed soil—

Heaven is blessed with perfect rest, but the blessing of earth is toil."

Jesus was the ideal young man in the way he faced the special task of his life. After his baptism by John he went off into the woods alone to think and pray and gird himself for his public ministry. So far he had lived a secluded life and done only the commonplace things. His baptism consecrated him to a different kind of a life. He had to come out of his seclusion and work in the open. He had to lay aside his

blessed tools of manual labor and take up the sword of the Spirit. He had to turn from his heaps of lumber and take up work on human souls. He had to leave off the building of barns and take up the building of the kingdom of God. He had to turn from the petty annoyances of the carpenter's trade and go to casting out devils. He had to leave the peace of Nazareth for the storm-swept seas and the war-cursed world. He had to turn from thirty years of uneventful quiet and enter upon three years of the most strenuous and momentous life any soul ever experienced.

For forty days he was so engrossed by his looming task that he did not eat. One day he realized that he was hungry. The devil suggested to him, "If you are God's son, tell these stones to turn into bread." That was a temptation to turn his unusual powers and his unique position to personal advantage. To the end of his career Jesus was tempted to save himself. That is the human thing to do. That is the sin of young men. The ordinary young man, when he discovers that he has splendid talent and is in a position of vantage, proceeds to try to coin his talents and advantages into selfish money. That is the point at which man is lost and his substance wasted. "No man liveth to himself" is a law of life, but most men start out

in violation of that law. The ordinary young man, knowing that he had power to turn the rocks of the hillside into a sumptuous meal to break a forty days' fast, would have had a good dinner right there before any other matters were considered. Most of us are like Esau and flippantly toss aside higher considerations for a mess of pottage.

Jesus felt that he could not afford to desecrate his new and unusual power by using it first for the gratification of his physical appetite. A few days before he had consecrated that power to the salvation of the world. He kept that power inviolate for the help of others and never worked a miracle for his own benefit. If it took a miracle to feed others, he would work the miracle, but he would not work a miracle to feed himself.

So Jesus replied to the evil suggestion, "Not on bread alone is man to live, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." Bread is not first. Material good is not first. Fleshly gratification is not first. Physical comfort is not first. Selfish use is not the highest use of talents and position. The gifts of God are given for unselfish investment.

If Jesus had used his miraculous power for selfish ends, he might have lived in a palace, with a retinue of servants ministering to his

luxurious tastes. He might have worked physical miracles on the lost world that would have saved him agonies of soul and tragedies of heart. But he would not spare his heart. That must be invested.

May the example of Jesus save young men from materialism, selfishness, and the temptation to take immediate personal comfort at the cost of higher considerations.

But the devil was ready with another suggestion. He said to Jesus, "If you are God's son, go to Jerusalem and throw yourself from the summit of the temple, for the Scripture says:

"He will give his angels orders about you,
And they will lift you up with their hands
So that you may never strike your foot against a stone!"

Now, that was a temptation to ignore the natural laws and presume that God would make him an exception to natural law so that he might do what other men dare not do.

That is a common mistake of young men. We know there are physical laws, mental laws, moral laws, and spiritual laws. We know that it is fatal for *all other* men to violate any of these laws; but we are tempted to think *we* can violate them and escape the penalty. Either we conceive that we are God's favorites, or that we are keen enough to "bootleg" around

the law and not get caught. Though every man who has lived has tried it and failed, no man is convinced yet. We are all still trying it. We all climb upon the temple of law and jump off just to prove that we are above the law and can defy it. That is the reason everybody you see is crippled or dead.

Jesus replied with an old Scripture passage, "You shall not try the Lord your God." Jesus knew that the laws are divine ordinances and that to violate them is to defy God. He is our ideal in his respect for law. He would not violate it even to advertise himself and win an immediate following in Jerusalem. To believe that I am an exception to universal law is to invite certain disaster. If other men cannot afford to violate the laws of health, if other men cannot afford to neglect intellectual culture, if it is disastrous for other men to violate the moral laws, if there is no excellence for other men without great labor, if the wages of sin is death for other men, if to be carnally minded is death for other men, common prudence suggests that I keep the law myself. I am simply proving that I am like other men when I fall for the common temptation that I am an exception.

It is dangerous to expect God to intervene in our behalf with a miracle. If men put them-

selves in positions where only a miracle can save, they are lost. God did not protect Jesus by miracles, and Jesus did not ask it. Jesus took his place under the law along with other men and did not expect to be excused from the operation of the law. In this he was a splendid example for all young men.

Jesus knew that his mission is to master the world and bring it all into the kingdom of God. The devil came to him in a third temptation and said to him, "I will give all this to you, if you will fall on your knees and do homage to me." It seemed that the devil might be able to do that very thing. The Roman Empire was the political master of the world at that time, and the devil was master of the Roman Empire. The devil was exalting emperors and assassinating them. He was parceling out kingdoms to kings. He was filling most of the seats in the senate. It is very likely that the devil was sufficiently in control of the politics of the world to work Jesus into a kingdom, then into the emperor's throne at Rome, and ultimately make his standards victorious over the whole world.

Later, the devil inspired the people of Palestine to try to force Jesus into the kingdom of Palestine. If Jesus had not resisted, the scheme

would have succeeded, and that would have been only the beginning of still further political advance.

But Jesus did not believe the devil could or would help a good man to any worthy achievement; so he declined his offer. In this he was the ideal young man. It would be wonderful if every young man would follow Jesus here. Too many have thought the devil can help to get a financial start and have accepted his suggestions. Too many have thought the devil could help them into the kingdom of happiness and have followed his suggestions. Too many have thought the devil could help them to political goals and have let him manage for them. The only kingdom in which the devil is a success is the kingdom of chaos, failure, and ruin. Everything he touches blights. The world is littered with his failures.

How splendidly and ideally Jesus moved about his little home in Nazareth, his jobs of carpentry in his home village, and the great task of redeeming the world! Nowhere does he drop below the ideal.

Richard Watson Gilder has written a striking little poem in which he gives the impression of a heathen sojourning in Galilee in the year 32 A.D.:

"If Jesus Christ is a man—
And only a man—I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him,
And to him will I cleave alway.

If Jesus Christ *is* a God—
And the only God—I swear
I will follow him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, and the air."

IV

JESUS THE IDEAL CHURCH MEMBER

"On the Sabbath he went to the synagogue, as he was accustomed to do, and stood up to read the Scriptures." (Luke 4: 16.)

THIS incident occurred in Nazareth, where Jesus had lived the entire thirty years of his life. He had recently followed the multitudes who went to hear the preaching of John the Baptist. He had himself been baptized by John. He had then gone away into the woods for forty days, where he thought and prayed and fasted and was tried by Satan. He had just come back from all this wonderful experience to his old home town. On the Sabbath he went to the same little church he had attended regularly all his life.

Wherever ten Jewish families lived there was supposed to be a synagogue organization, a church. If they were not able to have a building, they at least had a place of worship in the open. There was a building in Nazareth; and, as this was a good-sized town, it is supposed that the house of worship was fairly good. It is interesting to imagine that the carpenter

Jesus saw that the building was kept in good repair.

The synagogue had a council of elders very much like our modern church boards. One was made chairman, or ruler of the synagogue, and was consecrated to the office by a ceremony called the "laying on of hands."

There were frequent services through the week, and the synagogue was supposed to be open every day of the week. The Sabbath was specially a day of worship.

Men and women did not go together to the church. The men wore long, flowing robes, had various colored turbans on their heads, and sandals on their otherwise naked feet. The poor wore cotton clothing, the rich wore silk. The women dressed in long, flowing mantles of many colors, wore sandals, and had white veils drawn over their faces. They followed the back streets and alleys to church in order to avoid the gaze of the men. At the door of the church everybody removed sandals and went in with bare feet.

The service consisted of Scripture readings, comments, prayers, and songs. The book of Psalms was the hymn book. Some member of the congregation was invited to read a lesson and make comments. It is likely that Jesus did this frequently.

On this particular Sabbath Jesus was invited to read and speak, perhaps because he had been away for several weeks. Jesus was asked to read a lesson from the prophet Isaiah. He did so and proceeded to comment on the lesson with unusual power, spirit, and graciousness. Not many words are used to tell us of Jesus's Church life, but these few words tell us that Jesus was a regular and habitual attendant at church services; and a fair presumption is that he frequently took a leading part in the services.

The ideal feature of Jesus's church life lies in the fact that he *was accustomed to go to church*. He had the churchgoing habit.

The psychologists tell us that *habit* is supremely important in a man's life. "Habit is an acquired fixed way of acting. Anything acting in a certain way once tends to act in the same way again. A piece of paper folded on a line forms a crease along which it folds more easily a second time; and all material substances are subject to this law. A new machine runs more smoothly after it has been in use for a time, for all its parts are adjusted to the action. A new suit of clothes grows to fit the figure and follows all the movements and thus becomes comfortable. Organic beings are more pliable than inorganic substances and quickly

fall into grooves of action. The human body is highly plastic and subject to habits. Muscles and nerves, having acted in one way once, tend to repeat the action, which in time grows automatic. It is thus we learn to walk, speak, attend to our work, and carry on all the complex routine affairs of life. The skill of the performer, such as the pianist, is a remarkable example of complex habits that are wrought into the very texture of the nerves and muscles so that they come to act unconsciously."

We form the habit of walking so that we can walk unconsciously and without effort. We form the habit of spelling correctly, so that we spell correctly without effort and without realizing it. The pianist persistently trains her fingers so that they unconsciously and without effort hit the right keys and make music. No one is a good walker until he has acquired a perfect habit of walking. No one is a good speaker until he has formed a perfect habit of speaking. No one is a good pianist until she has formed a perfect habit of playing. A perfect habit makes us perfectly efficient physically.

So, a perfect habit makes us efficient morally and spiritually. A man can habitually tell the truth, live clean, and act generously until it is his very nature to do those things, and he does

them unconsciously and without effort. If you have a battle with yourself every time you face a moral situation, that is a sign that you have not formed a perfect habit of doing right. You need to cultivate your moral habits just as your little girl cultivates the habits of her fingers.

If prayer, worship, and church services are an awkward effort for you, that is a sure sign that you need practice in these things until you have formed the habit of doing them correctly and efficiently and can do them easily, gladly, and without being bored and wearied. Many people do become habitually efficient in their spiritual life.

Nothing but regularity and perseverance will make us habitually efficient anywhere. If a man plays ball only one day in the year, he can never become a ball player. If a girl touches her piano only once a year, she can never become a pianist. A man who spells a word correctly to-day and then spells it incorrectly every other day this week can never learn to spell. A man who tells the truth and acts honorably to-day, then lies and acts dishonorably all the rest of the week, can never become a good man. The man who limps awkwardly through some kind of a prayer in occasional emergencies and neglects prayer at other times can never become an effectual

prayer. The man who can be induced to attend a church service only once in a great while *can never become a church man*. He can never become really religious. The man who does not go to church any oftener than I go to the bat is no better church man than I am a ball player. The woman who does not attend church any oftener than I play the piano is no better church member than I am a pianist. *What we do habitually determines what we are. Our characters are formed by what we do. We become what we do.* In this way "each man builds himself."

Suppose you find Mary at play, and you remind her that she has not done her piano practice, and she begins to excuse herself on the ground that she has not stolen any jam nor scratched brother's eyes out for a long time. That would be a queer excuse for neglecting piano practice; and you would tell Mary that, no matter how innocent she might be of all actual criminal acts, she could never become a pianist without diligent practice.

Now that is exactly the excuse people make for not practicing their church life. They invariably tell us, "I am not so bad," "I don't do any harm," etc. But that is a poor way to excuse one's self from the persistent practice that will build up in us perfect moral and re-

ligious habits and make of us certain moral and religious characters.

That is the trouble with many Church members now. They attend church so infrequently that when they do go they are ill at ease, cannot really enter into the worship, and stand apart as mere spectators.

"There is no excellence" in church life without the great labor of habitual practice in attendance and taking part in the services. Only in this way does church life become natural, easy, delightful, and profitable. The people who can say, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," are the people who have practiced "the presence of God." Thank God, there are many such people.

I suppose the reason I do not practice on the ball field is the fact that I do not consider ball as so very important for me. And I suppose the reason so many people do not practice church attendance is the fact that they are not impressed that church life is so very important for them.

But ball, music, and many other good things are more or less optional. We may take them or leave them off. However, religion is presented to us as the supreme need of every man.

I saw a man dying this week. All his life he refused to pray and would not allow religious songs in his presence; but in his last days, as he was taking leave of this world and setting out for the other, he called constantly upon God to help him. I visited another man about eighty years old. He told me that he had never been religious, but that he had been wicked and had neglected to call upon God. But now he is stretching out his palsied hands and straining his blinded eyes to find God. Both these men realized at last that they have needed religion all these years. Another man in this city has lived in an indifferent manner as regards church life. A few weeks ago he was prostrated with high blood pressure, and he wanted all the preachers to come to see him. The great lawgiver, Solon, said, "Look to the end of life." There is no way to be what you would like to be at death except to diligently practice that kind of a life all the time now. Mary was told that she was to be in a concert six weeks hence. At once she thrilled with the notion of how she would like to appear and perform on that momentous occasion. Did she neglect anything? No! Every available moment was put into practice. Dresses were prepared. Every possible situation was imagined and lived through in advance. When the day came, she was ready

for the concert because she had practiced for it. There is one game we all must play. Each of us will take the stage at some time. Can we be sure we are going to play that game right unless we practice the kind of character we would like to have at that great moment? Jesus testified to the importance of the Church attendance habit by being a regular attendant himself. From what he said and what he did we know what was his estimate of the importance of the Church. It is said that when he came to the world he came to the Church. That is where he did most of his preaching. He committed his gospel to the Church and set the Church to the supreme task of saving the world. He did not go to any other organization or depend upon any other organization. He called the Church his "bride." He speaks of it as his own. He died for the Church. He is himself "head over all things to the Church."

Men cannot afford to be the least indifferent toward an institution that Jesus lived in, died for, and is head of. His attitude toward the Church and his connection with the Church make him our ideal in Church life.

Then the Church testifies for itself. History shows that organized religion, or the Church, has led the human race out of savagery into civilization. Religion gave us writing and has

been the inspiration of literature. Religion gave us painting and sculpture and has led to this day in art. Religion is the mother of song and the inventor of instruments of music. Religion has made our discoveries and inventions and produced the material wealth of the world. Religion has given us government and built up our great nations. But for religion, it is very probable that the human race would still be naked, illiterate, unhoused, and ungoverned savages in the depths of the unbroken forests. Everything that has lifted, taught, cleansed, civilized, ennobled, and dignified man has been given directly or indirectly by religion.

And nothing but religion can hold these things for us. Men certainly lapse from all high and splendid things as they let go the guiding hand of religion. And a religion that is not diligently practiced can do us little good. We may enjoy the benefits of a civilization that religious people have built up and preserved; for religious people are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. All people get some of the benefits of a religious civilization, though they may not contribute anything to it. But the supreme and spiritual benefits of religion come to those who have learned to worship in God's house and enjoy it.

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in thy presence will avail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take!
What parched grounds refresh as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear;
We kneel, how weak! we rise, how full of power!

Why therefore should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong—
That we are sometimes overborne with care—
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled—when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with thee."

I am told that soon after the Civil War a lovely young woman of Jefferson County, Ark., went away to a woman's college, stayed four years, and graduated in the literary course and in music. She came home and married an illiterate and careless man, and they moved to a backwoods settlement of this county. She did not carry a piano with her. She ceased to buy books and magazines. She lapsed into the commonplace and drudgery of farm life without the redeeming and sustaining power of literature and music. In a few years there remained no sign of her college attainments. She was unread, her fingers had lost their nimble touch, her once refined and beautiful face

had hardened and blackened and wrinkled into uncultured ugliness.

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Without regular and habitual prayer, we cannot pray even in the greatest emergency. Without regular and habitual church attendance we cannot have the fine art of communion with God. If we have it now, we are sure to lose it if we neglect to practice it.

The great scientist, Darwin, tells us how he lost his soul. He said that when he was young he read poetry, enjoyed paintings and statuary, loved music and sang some himself. He had a soul for the beautiful and lovely. But he got interested in physical science and buried himself in it. He had no time for the fine things he enjoyed in his boyhood. In later years he waked to the fact that he had lost all interest in those things. He had ceased to think of, or care for, the beautiful, the poetic, the artistic, the spiritual.

"O living Church! Thine errand speed,
Fulfill thy task sublime;
With bread of life earth's hunger feed,
Redeem the evil time."

V

JESUS OUR IDEAL IN TEMPTATION

"He has been tempted in every way, . . . without committing any sin." (Heb. 4: 15.)

JESUS is the Son of God, but he is also the Son of Man. He had a complete human nature and lived a natural human life from birth to death. He passed through all human experiences. He was as hungry as we are, he was as sleepy as we are, he was as tired as we are, and he was tempted as we are.

There are two kinds of temptations.

God tempts, or tries, men in order to develop them. He asked Abraham to offer up Isaac in sacrifice, and when he saw Abraham was going to do it he stopped him. In many ways, sometimes severe, God tests our faith, our love, our patience, our strength, our courage. In this way he makes us understand ourselves. The heroism of the martyrs has been a wonderful testimony to the world of what Christianity can do for a soul. The severe tests and trials through which God leads people are intended to refine, purify, develop, and strengthen them. "Although just now distressed by various trials,

they are to show that your faith when tested is found to be more precious than gold, which though it is perishable is tested with fire." "Dear friends, do not be surprised that a test of fire is being applied to you, as though a strange thing were happening to you." God does not tempt with evil or to evil. All God's dealings with men are for their good. "Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he stands the test he will be given the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him. No one should think when he is tempted that his temptation comes from God, for God is incapable of being tempted by what is evil, and he does not tempt anyone."

Satan tempts men with evil in order to destroy them. There are two purposes in every suggestion to evil that comes to a man; one purpose is to keep that man from *being* his best, and the other is to keep him from *doing* his best. It is an effort to defeat the man. To yield to the temptation to sin is fatal to character and achievement. "The wages sin pays is death."

The whole problem of evil, temptation, and sin is difficult. We have not yet understood the mystery, but we know we sin. "Whoever commits sin disobeys law; sin is disobedience to law." Sin is a wrong act or a wrong attitude.

We may become sinners by being filled with evil thoughts, passions, feelings, ambitions without committing any act. The man who wishes to kill but cannot is a murderer. The man who wishes to steal and cannot is a thief. The guilt of a wrong act attaches to the mind and heart rather than to the hand; for if a man kills another without malice, anger, or any evil feeling, it is not considered murder. If a man takes another's property without any intention to defraud or steal or wrong, he is not a thief. A man's hand is merely the driven servant of his wicked will. So sin is a wrong condition or act of the inner man.

The Bible says that Satan puts the evil suggestions in a man's mind and urges him on to wrong acts. Satan never shows himself; he simply shows us the suggestion. He remains in the background invisible. The evil suggestion seems to rise from somewhere within us. James says, "When anyone is tempted, it is by his own desire that he is enticed and allured." We usually do not suspect that an enemy is throwing the suggestion into our minds, but we think it is our own desire born within us. We sometimes think it is all right to yield to the suggestion because we consider the suggestion as natural, the normal desire of our own nature, and therefore legitimate. If these sug-

gestions appeared to come from without, and to be unnatural and foreign to us, we would be horrified at them and expel them; but since lust, covetousness, anger, ambition, and other such feelings spring up from within us, and we are persuaded that they are natural and legitimate, we hold to them, indulge them, and seek to justify them. That is the reason it is so hard to get men to quit sin. They think we are asking them to give up personal rights and to deny their very natures.

Whatever is natural is not hurtful. We are supposed to live according to the laws of our own nature. If we do that, we are successful. But the fact that yielding to certain suggestions is ruinous to us is evidence that the suggestions are unnatural and from without. An enemy has thrown evil suggestions into our lives for the purpose of wrecking them, very much as an anarchist throws a monkey wrench into a machine for the purpose of wrecking it.

An evil suggestion is not marked "evil"; if so, we would instantly turn it down. It appears as something good and desirable. The first temptation we read of was like that. The tree of evil appeared to Eve as good, pleasant, and desirable, and she tasted the fruit hastily without waiting to find out whether there was something else better and more desirable. After

her hasty action she knew that she had done wrong and that it would have been better to refuse the suggestion.

With every temptation to evil there is an alternative. Another course is open. We do not have to accept the evil suggestion. Before we act we should inquire carefully for the *best* course to pursue and follow that at all costs. "It is no superhuman temptation you have had. And God can be depended on not to let you be tried beyond your strength, but when temptation comes to give you a way out of it, so that you can withstand it." We should look for the other course. We should take a sober second thought—as the psychologist would say, allow the other proposition to come into the field of consciousness long enough to be thoroughly considered.

Some men know nothing but sin. They have practiced wrong attitudes and wrongdoing so long that they have hardened into fast habits of evil, and they do not know there is anything better. The better thing has always been shut out. An ignorant man does not know that there is anything better than ignorance; so the man who has always done wrong does not know that there is any better way to do. He is morally blind. That is why Christ is set before men, that they may see one who thinks, feels, and

acts as a man should. Jesus is the incarnation of the right way of living. No one should plod along blindly in his old ways. He should study Jesus, the greatest person who ever lived on earth, to see if he can find a better way.

Jesus was tempted just as we are tempted. Sometimes when he was alone a wrong suggestion was thrown into his mind, as was the case in the wilderness after his baptism. Sometimes a committee of designing men would submit to him catch questions, trying to trap him. Sometimes a keen-witted lawyer would go to him with a two-horned question, feeling sure that Jesus would gore himself on one of the horns. He was constantly thrown into the most trying situations where ordinary men would have suffered a moral fall. However, he did not fall.

But many people considered Jesus a sinner. He did not seem to be religious enough. He did not stay away from wicked people. He ate and drank with sinners sometimes, and that made some of the Church folks think he must be a sinner himself. He did not fast as often as some of the Church folks did, and they thought that was a bad sign. He often worked miracles of healing on the Sabbath, and some said that was working on the Sabbath, and they considered that wrong. One Sabbath

he opened the eyes of a man who had been born blind, and some of the Church folks were very much worked up about it. They said of Jesus: "We know that this man is a sinner. . . . This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day." Jesus was finally arrested and brought into court, and there they accused him of perverting the nation, forbidding to pay taxes, claiming to be a king, saying he could destroy the temple and build it again in three days, of blaspheming. He was finally crucified as a criminal, with criminals, and in the same way. But Pilate, who was the judge of the court, said, "I find no fault in him." The verdict of history might be expressed in the words of Jean Paul Richter, "The holiest among the mighty, the mightiest among the holy."

We can see now that Jesus's conduct under these temptations was not only splendid, but common sense. He did, not only the high moral thing, but the sensible thing. When we know that a suggestion is evil, and that to take the suggestion will bring disaster, not only will fine moral character decide against it, but common sense as well.

What saved Jesus?

First, the teaching and training he received in early childhood. We have already studied him as the ideal child. Well, it takes the ideal

child to make the ideal man. It is often said that character is fixed in the first seven years of life. If childhood is neglected, the mature years will show it. If a child is trained up in the way he should go, he will not depart from it. That has been proverbial for thousands of years in many countries. It is now being recognized as a scientific fact, and courts are depending upon it. By actual test it has been proved that Sunday school and Church influence does save children and young people from crime. Supreme Court Justice Lewis L. Fawcett, of Brooklyn, declares that in the past eighteen years he has had more than four thousand boys less than twenty years old arraigned before him charged with various degrees of crime; and that of this large number only three were members of a Sunday school at the time their crimes were committed, and these three were guilty of mere technical offenses devoid of heinousness. The justice says: "In view of this significant showing, I do not hesitate to express the conviction that attendance by young men at Sunday school or other regular religious work, with its refining atmosphere, is signally preventive against crime and worthy of careful study by those who are dismayed by the increase of crime on the part of the young men of America. . . . The sustained, whole-

some, moral atmosphere imparted through habitual attendance upon Sunday school and church will expel criminal impulses."

Jesus was made safe in childhood. From the beginning he was drilled in right habits and right thinking. In later years when he was urged to the right or left he had only to keep straight ahead in the way he started upon in childhood.

Second, Jesus knew the value of withdrawing from other people and being alone for thought, meditation, prayer. He knew the worth of calm. He often slipped away from the crowd that was using up his energy and called in the forces of mind and heart to the citadel of his own isolated soul. There he would come to his best again and come down to the crowd for new triumphs. He was apart with only three of his intimate friends when he took on that transfigured appearance. He had to be entirely alone at the supremely strategic point of his earthly struggle, in Gethsemane, the evening of his betrayal. He had a custom of going apart to pray; sometimes rising long before the break of day and sometimes spending the whole night praying alone in the woods.

"Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent;
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.

But the olives they were not blind to him,
The little gray leaves were kind to him,
The thorn-tree had a mind to him,
When into the woods he came."

We are too much in company. We go in crowds. We are too afraid of ourselves to be alone. When a savage is sick he gathers a company about him to beat drums and frighten the evil spirits away. We do that way, too. A little quiet introspection makes us uncomfortable, and we must have company or entertainment to make us forget ourselves. But there is no decency or safety for a man unless he keeps his own house.

"To thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

Third, Jesus had fixed great illuminating truths in the temple of his soul, as we put strong electric lights in our houses. He lived and worked in the white radiance of these truths. His house was never dark, and evil is at a disadvantage in the light. Satan lives and works in a kingdom of darkness. Like his followers, he loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. When Satan came to Jesus, they faced each other under the blaze of such truths as, "Not on bread alone is man to

live"; "You must do homage before the Lord your God, and worship him alone"; "You shall not try the Lord your God." He always replied to an evil suggestion by saying, "It is written," and then quoting some great text from the Old Testament.

Jesus talked a great deal about truth and light. He said, "The truth will set you free." He prayed for his disciples in these words, "Consecrate them by truth." That is a wonderful consecration! To hunger for the truth, to love the truth, to buy the truth and sell it not, to live in the light of truth, to be saved by the truth, and to work for the advancement of truth!

No man can withstand the tempter in the dark. If he does not know any better, he will believe the tempter. If he cannot touch a button and flood his soul with the light of great Scriptures and great moral and spiritual truths, he is at the mercy of his foe! But if he has truths more brilliant than Satan's lies he can make a reply to the tempter that will drive away the evil one. Truth is stronger than falsehood. Satan uses only falsehood. Man is privileged to have and use the truth. Thus equipped, man is more than a match for his adversary the devil.

Fourth, Jesus turned to God when con-

fronted with evil. Jesus knew that he himself was divine. He called himself Son, and God he called Father. He felt he could not afford to do a thing beneath the dignity of the divine family. The Son must be true to the Father at all cost. The family name and honor must be kept inviolate. Imagine Jesus in the wilderness, almost exhausted after waiting forty days for his Father to feed him, walking around with Satan, gathering stones and changing them to bread and sitting down to eat! His faith in his Father wavering! His patience with his Father exhausted! His dependence upon his Father ending! Accepting help from his Father's enemy! Think of his accepting Satan's suggestion to get a little cheap notoriety and give himself a spectacular start. Leaving the Father out of the program altogether, he and Satan go up to Jerusalem, climb to the pinnacle of the temple, and jump off into the midst of the astonished throng in the street below. Disregarding the natural law of gravity his Father ordained! Beginning his career by taking the advice of his Father's enemy! Or think of his being thrilled with the prospect of a swift and easy mastery of the world; the prospect of accomplishing his great mission without the tremendous cost he had expected; the thought of succeeding on a more attractive

plan than his Father's! Think of his bowing to his Father's enemy! Think of his accepting kingdoms and empires from his Father's enemy!

No: he was too true a Son for that! He would eat no bread except what his Father gave him. He would not violate even one of the physical laws of his Father's kingdom. He would accept no plan and no help in his tremendous enterprise except his Father's.

I wonder if it will not help us, when we are tempted with evil, to remember who we are. We are in the image of God. We are the sons of God. We do not belong in the mineral kingdom, nor in the vegetable kingdom, nor in the animal kingdom, but in the kingdom of God. We are divine beings! We are the offspring of God. God is a Spirit, and we are spirits like he is, only we are little children wrapped in the swaddling clothes of flesh for a few days.

Face to face with an evil suggestion, did you ever hear a still small voice saying, "You cannot afford it"? Did it call you to your senses? Did it make you remember who you are? Did you see that this thing was unworthy of you? Did you put away the evil suggestion and walk off singing, "I'm the child of a King"?

"Now are we the sons of God." If we could always remember that when tempted to evil, I believe we would stand for the name and honor

of the divine family to which we belong and reply to the tempter in these words, "Am I a dog, that I should do such a thing?"

Yes, Jesus faced trials by his Father and temptations by the devil just as we have to do; but he did not sin. He is able to sympathize with and help us when we are passing through these experiences. "And so he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might prove a compassionate high priest as well as one faithful in his service to God, *in order to forgive the people's sins*. For because he has himself been tempted in what he has suffered he is able to help others who are in trial." (Heb. 2: 17, 18.)

VI

JESUS OUR IDEAL IN OPPOSITION AND PERSECUTION

"That is the life to which you have been called, for Christ himself suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you might follow his footsteps. He committed no sin, and deceit was never on his lips. He was abused, but he did not retort. He suffered, but he did not threaten, but committed his case to him who judges justly." (1 Pet. 2: 21-24.)

THE way is not smooth for any man who undertakes something really worth while. Any way through life is difficult. If one simply drifts down stream, making no effort, resisting nothing, and aiming at nothing, he must endure hardships; for he is sure to drift into whirlpools, over rapids, into eddies, and finally have his craft capsized. If he decides to take on a heavy cargo and carry it upstream, he must meet and overcome the steady gravity of the stream, climb the rapids, and find a way over the falls.

Each of us must choose between the downward and effortless course, with its tragedies as we drift and the wreck at last, and the up-

ward route with its opposition and toil and achievement.

It is said that Jesus took the "way of perishing." That is the way up, and every one who goes up must go that way. "There is no excellence without great labor." Jesus undertook to deliver a world far upstream, and he did not expect to do it without sacrificing himself. He knew the weight and worth of the world, he knew the downward pull of the stream of tendency, he knew the enemies of his undertaking, and he knew that he could not spare himself. If he saved others he could not save himself.

Sarah K. Bolton says:

"I like the man who faces what he must
With step triumphant and a heart of cheer;
Who fights the daily battle without fear;
Sees his hopes fail, yet keeps unfaltering trust
That God is God—that somehow, true and just,
His plans work out for mortals; not a tear
Is shed when fortune, which the world holds dear,
Falls from his grasp—better, with love, a crust
Than loving in dishonor; envies not,
Nor loses faith in man; but does his best,
Nor ever murmurs at his humble lot;
But, with a smile and words of hope, gives zest
To every toiler. He alone is great
Who by a life heroic conquers fate."

Jesus began to encounter opposition as soon

as he undertook the unusual. As long as he lived quietly there at Nazareth and ran the carpenter shop just as his father Joseph had had run it, all went smoothly; but when he disposed of the shop and tools and started upon a new career he found the way rough. Everybody and everything will help us to stay in a rut, but everybody and everything will get in our way when we try to get out of the rut and cut a new and independent path for ourselves. We are allowed to do as father did. We can do that, and nobody says anything about it. But when we take up a different work, or undertake to carry on father's work with new methods, we excite comment and criticism.

So, when Jesus came home from his baptism, and went down to his little church on the Sabbath, and told his kinsfolk and neighbors that he was giving up carpentry and was going to preach, he created a sensation. When he went further and intimated that he was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, they could not control themselves. "And when the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all very angry, and they got up and drove him out of the town and took him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, intending to throw him down from it. But he made his way through the midst of them and went on."

He went back to Nazareth some time later and preached again in the synagogue to his relatives and neighbors; but he could not do much with them. They had trusted him with hammer and saw and building contracts, but they would not trust him with the Bible and their spiritual interests. He was nothing to them but Joseph's son and a carpenter.

His kinsfolk and neighbors were not numbered among his followers until the latter part of his ministry. They stood away from him, criticizing and hindering. But they were finally converted to him, and on the day of Pentecost they were in the company in that upper room where the Holy Spirit came upon them with such power.

The Church opposed him because he was an unusual sort of rabbi. Jesus had grown up in the Jewish Church, was a member of it, knew its scriptures, was accustomed to its services, and was respectful of its history. It would have been all right for him to preach if he had not been an unusual preacher. "The crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them like one who had authority and not like their scribes." They said, "No man ever talked as he does." He did not prophesy smooth things. His message was like a keen sword. It went to the heart, and his hearers were wrought up.

They could not be indifferent. They either felt like worshiping him or crucifying him.

Then the Church opposed Jesus because he was so indifferent to many of the cherished notions and practices of the Church. The Church was very particular about all the outward appearances. The buildings were beautiful and clean, the dress of the rabbis was faultless; all the religious forms and ceremonies were carried out with the greatest care and precision; tithing was practiced so strictly that even the smallest garden stuff was tithed; twice a week the rabbis put on a sad countenance and disfigured their faces and made an appearance of fasting; they loved to pray standing in the church and on the street corners, that they might be seen of men; and in every way they made the outside of the cup clean, but left the inside unclean. Jesus told the Church people that the church was as beautiful as a white sepulcher on the outside, but within it was full of dead men's bones. Of course that stirred them to anger.

The Church criticized Jesus because he would sometimes omit the ceremonial washing of his hands when he went to dine. It criticized him because he was free and easy in his regard for the Sabbath. The Church had prescribed to the minutest detail what might be done on the Sabbath. If a knot could be untied with one

hand it might be done, but if both hands were required it must not be done. One letter might be made, but not two. The amount of food that might be carried from one place to another on the Sabbath was less than one dried fig, the amount of water just enough to make an eye-salve. No fire must be kindled on the Sabbath. The sick must not be treated. Broken bones must not be set. No one must walk over three quarters of a mile.

Jesus told the Church that such a manner of observing the Sabbath was ridiculous and enslaving, and that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. He did not hesitate to walk as far as he pleased on the Sabbath. He healed people on the Sabbath. He pulled off heads of wheat and rubbed out the grains and ate them on the Sabbath. The Church authorities said they knew Jesus was a sinner because he did not keep the Sabbath as the Church folks were supposed to do.

Another thing the Church leaders did not like about Jesus was that he sometimes associated with and ate with non-church folks, while a rabbi was supposed to keep himself far apart from ordinary people. Jesus was compromising the dignity of the ministry.

The Church was conservative, living two thousand years in the past, superstitious, fa-

natical, intolerant, blind, ritualistic, materialistic, legalistic, and prejudiced. Jesus told them so. He accused the Church of having stoned many of the great prophets of the past and of having allowed John the Baptist to be beheaded. All this worked the Church leaders up to such irritation that they said Jesus was insane and devil-possessed.

The multitudes of common people followed Jesus with enthusiasm. They had been indifferent toward the regular rabbis. The Church leaders were jealous. When Jesus appointed twelve apostles, and began to talk about establishing a new Church, the old Church authorities understood that to be an opposition movement; and they felt that they must crush it. They thought that if they could dispose of the leader the movement would die out. So they plotted to entrap Jesus and put him to death; but they had to be careful, for the people were with Jesus.

The Church finally worked the government into the plot. Palestine was at that time one of the small kingdoms of the Roman Empire. Some of the Church leaders reported to the Roman government officials that Jesus was claiming to be THE KING OF THE JEWS and was telling the people not to pay their taxes to the Roman government. All of this was either

pure fabrication or a perversion of what Jesus said. He had said plainly that his kingdom was not of this world, but from above.

So Jesus had to preach his gospel and do his work in the face of opposition on the part of his family, the Church, and the government.

Jesus was the gentlest of men. He was a man of peace. He was a man of love. He made every possible allowance for the weakness of men and the ignorance of men. But he had a message to deliver, he had to build a kingdom, he had to save a world. His cause was supreme. It had to succeed, whatever opposition of men had to be crushed and whatever sacrifice of himself had to be made. He went around trouble when it was not necessary to meet it. He went away from his enemies when nothing could be gained in meeting them. He avoided death until death was more important to his cause than life.

Ordinarily his methods were quiet and peaceable. When he met outright hypocrisy and falsehood, he burned with righteous indignation and delivered scathing denunciation. Most of the people with whom he dealt were poor, ignorant, and weak. For them he had the tenderest and most considerate feelings. When people like that opposed him and hindered his work, he prayed for their forgive-

ness on the ground that they did not know what they were doing. When he found a bunch of shopkeepers running their stalls in the temple and practicing all manner of extortion on the country people who had come to Jerusalem to attend the feast, he resorted to violence and made a whip of cords and drove them out, saying, "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you make it a robbers' cave."

John Hay says:

"Not in dumb resignation
We lift our hands on high;
Not like the nerveless fatalist,
Content to do and die.
Our faith springs like the eagle,
Who soars to meet the sun
And cries exulting unto Thee,
'O Lord, thy will be done!'

When tyrant feet are trampling
Upon the common weal,
Thou dost not bid us bend and writhe
Beneath the iron heel;
In thy name we assert our right
By sword or tongue or pen,
And even the headsman's axe may flash
Thy message unto men.

Thy will—it strengthens weakness;
It bids the strong be just:
No lip to fawn, no hand to beg,
No brow to seek the dust.

Wherever man oppresses man
Beneath the liberal sun,
O Lord, be there, thine arm made bare,
Thy righteous will be done."

Jesus was meek and lowly. He sought nothing for himself. He allowed men to call him sinful, insane, and devil-possessed. He recommended that when you are slapped on one cheek you turn the other; and when a man takes away your cloak that you give him your coat also. He came not to do his own will. He was not interested in gaining anything for himself, or in saving himself.

He was interested in his cause. He said: "We must carry on the work of him who has sent me while the daylight lasts. Night is coming, when no one can do any work." He allowed no one to hinder the work. No one could silence the message. He stood upon the firing line for his kingdom at whatever risk to himself. He sought first the kingdom of God.

What a great ideal for us! No man looking for personal advantage and dodging about to save himself is worth anything to an important cause. And a life that is saved at the cost of devotion to a great cause is really lost. A man becomes great by identifying himself with a great cause. We gain life by pouring out life without stint for some splendid purpose. The tall, mighty,

divine men of history sprang from life invested in some great cause. Judas took the way of self-interest and lost his life; but Peter took the way of perishing, was crucified with his head downward, and gained immortality. Benedict Arnold looked out for himself at West Point and had his name recorded in history as a traitor; but George Washington endured the hardships of Valley Forge and became the first in the hearts of his countrymen.

"Speak, History! Who are Life's victors? Unroll thy long annals and say,
Are they those whom the world called the victors,
who won the success of a day?
The martyrs, or Nero? The Spartans, who fell at Thermopylæ's tryst,
Or the Persians and Xerxes? His judges or Socrates?
Pilate or Christ?"

No man should do a needless thing to turn his fellow men against him. As far as possible we should live peaceably with all men. Before we antagonize men we should be sure that our cause is worth more than their friendship; and only the greatest causes are worth more than the friendship of men. The mere satisfaction of being on the opposite side and having the notoriety of contrariness is cheap. Life is too valuable to be sacrificed for small matters. Jesus gave his for the salvation of the world, but

he would not have given it for anything less. So every man who gives his life should be sure he is getting fair exchange.

But we live in a world where all good and great causes must be fought for if they succeed. Good men must have the self-sacrificing spirit and the heroism to dare and do. Most men will not help, and some will oppose and hinder.

“Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne—

But the scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim
unknown

Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch
above his own.”

VII

JESUS OUR IDEAL IN SERVICE

"He went about doing good." (Acts 10: 38.)

I THINK this is the most beautiful thing said about Jesus. It is a simple story of the ordinary kindnesses shown by the plainest of men, and yet it gives us the best picture we have of Jesus. This little story is the small end of the telescope through which we see him who is the "LIGHT OF THE WORLD."

Through this tiny opening we see Jesus, the greatest man of history, going about among the poor and the ignorant and the sick and the bad, helping every one who would let him. He lived with them, he worked with them, he talked with them, he laughed with them, and he wept with them.

There is no better evidence of Jesus's greatness and divinity than the fact that he was able so wonderfully to condescend to men of such low estate.

"There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
In the place of their self-content;
There are souls like stars, that dwell apart
In a fellowless firmament."

Jesus was not like that. The fact that the "common people heard him gladly" is evidence that he identified himself with them and their interests. W. E. Gladstone *appeared* great when he spoke on the floor of the English Parliament; but when he was discovered one day sitting by the bed of a sick boy in a humble home on a back street he was *known* to be great.

The light of a feeble candle does not reach far and deep, but the greatness of the sun is proved by the fact that his light and heat reach everything on earth. Of course he gilds the tops of the mountains, flashes upon the foliage of the tall trees, and tips with gold the waves of the ocean; but he also plays in the low grass down in the valleys, he steals down into the caves, and smiles under the rocks, and he paints in beautiful colors on the bottom of the sea.

Some things are scarce and only a few people may have them, but the necessary things are abundant and everybody may have them. There is enough sunlight for even the poor, there is enough water for all the thirsty, there is enough air for all who pant for breath, there is enough bread for all who hunger, and there is enough of Jesus for all that labor and are heavy laden. His life was so abundant that he

could afford to pour it out among common people. He met Kipling's test of a real man:

"If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings, nor lose the common touch."

There are two sad conditions in the world. First, there is a great mass of needy people. Some are ignorant. They stumble on in the darkness. They are the prey of every vicious beast of darkness and are steadily destroyed for lack of knowledge; and nobody who knows will talk to them. Some are poor. They are in a desperate struggle with the wolf at the door of the home. They love home and children more than life itself. Day and night they fight with no weapons save the naked hands. They accept the hardest toil and face the cruellest dangers to get bread for the children. Thousands lose their fight and leave their children to beg; and nobody comes to help them fight. Some are sick. Every one of the long list of dreaded diseases has incarnated itself in the flesh of thousands. Thousands of people drag their ills along our streets and lanes by day and toss with them upon their hard beds at night. Dreading death, yet they feel themselves being certainly dragged by disease into the grave; and nobody comes to them. Some are bad. Their minds are in the grip of vicious schemes, and their souls are possessed by unholy im-

pulses. They are led captive by the devil; but nobody comes to them and expresses care for their souls. Many have all these awful needs—they are ignorant and poor and sick and bad! But the worst thing about it all is the loneliness of it! To freeze to death alone! To starve to death alone! To contend alone in a losing fight and die! To stand alone while the devil binds the soul!

The other sad condition is in the large group of comfortable people who are doing nothing for this group of the needy. They stay apart. They do not touch. They do not know. They do not care. Their only prayer is a secret, "I thank thee that I am not as other men." When told of the needy, they coldly question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" There is no greater sin than the aloofness of Comfort from Need. "But if some one who is rich sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how can he have any love for God in his heart?" Lazarus at the rich man's gate was Jesus's illustration of Need at the door of Comfort. Comfortable people are well clothed and well fed and well sheltered and take these things without an uncomfortable thought or feeling for the less comfortable.

Thank God, this is not true of all comfortable people. Many of them are investing their two

talents and their five talents for the good of humanity; and anybody who does this is following Jesus about doing good. Many who know are teaching, many who have are giving, many who are well are visiting the sick, many who are good are going to the rescue of the bad. The greatest souls in the world are going down and out among the people of low estate.

Why should the comfortable hold aloof from the needy? They are our own people. The man who is financially prosperous has a host of kinsfolk who are very poor. The educated man has many near relatives who are densely ignorant. The well man has many near to him of the flesh who are afflicted. The man who has kept himself from the grosser crimes and lives morally and respectably has near kinsmen living in disgrace and languishing in prison. The needy and desperate are the near blood relatives of the comfortable and fortunate. What a narrow escape the fortunate have had! One of our Presidents who stood in the gaze and glory of the whole world had very near relatives in this State who were very poor and obscure.

"So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man!"

The most fortunate people need only to trace

their history back a few years to find their own humble origin amid conditions they do not like to talk about. But they should never forget the hole of the pit whence they were digged, and no change of circumstance should be allowed to break the natural bonds of flesh and blood.

Jesus taught the brotherhood of man and did all his work upon that basis. He gave no countenance to the unnatural classification of men into highly privileged groups and outcast groups. Some of the neediest people he found thought they moved in high circles and were not like other men, while some of the most princely men of history he picked up in most unpromising places. He was a discoverer of men. He knew what was in a man. History justifies his judgment, for nearly all the splendid and outstanding men of the race have emerged from lowly and obscure conditions.

The verdict of history is that Jesus was the greatest man who has lived on our earth. This greatest man gave his life going about doing what the world calls little services for ordinary people. His own nation was in a galling vassalage to Rome; but he would not be their king, head a revolution, and make their nation independent and splendid among the nations of the earth. Three fourths of the people of the Roman Empire were slaves; but Jesus mar-

shaled no armies to strike for their liberty. He had made the earth, and knew what is in it; but he did not unlock its secrets and give the race immediate possession of its forces and resources. Nearly all truth that men have always desired to look into lay behind a dark veil of mystery; but Jesus did not draw aside the veil and allow all men to see at once to the depths of all truth. So many spectacular deeds were left undone! But he was so busy doing little things for the poor, the sick, the ignorant, the bad!

Abraham Lincoln said, "God must love the common people, for he has made so many of them." Certainly, if a laborer wants a large field in which to harvest, he will find it among the common people. The ills of the common people keep the doctors busy; the crimes of the common people keep the lawyers busy; the ignorance of the common people keeps the teachers busy; the sins of the common people keep the preachers busy; the trade of the common people keeps the merchants busy; and the votes of the common people put men in office. The upward movements of the race start with the common people. If a government has become corrupt and oppressive, the revolution always begins with the common people. If a Church has become formal and

dead, the revival and reformation always begin with the common people. If you live in a house by the side of the road and try to be a friend to man, you will soon find that not many wise, not many rich, not many mighty will come by your house; but there will be endless caravans of the poor, illiterate, sick, and wicked. They constitute your opportunity for doing good.

The needs of men are for the little services. Not many need heroic or conspicuous services. They need bread, a cup of cold water, some clothing, some instruction, some encouragement, some friendship, some prayer, some fellowship with somebody who is making it all right. Just a touch of human kindness is all that most people need. Just a little whistle by a man who loves dogs will make the most dejected cur leap to his feet and wag his glad tail. Just recognize a man, go out where he is, take a natural brotherly interest in him, and he is likely to summon enough courage and strength to get up under his load and go on. The human touch is what men need. So many are alone! That unnerves and kills!

Nearly all our opportunities are little. We may think we have great talents and wish for a conspicuous place in which to make a heroic display of them. We may wish to do good, but

wait for an opportunity to do the glorious good. If we wait for the opportunity of heroism and glory, we are apt never to do anything. If we are willing to serve in little things, we may keep busy all the time.

Life is made up of small things, as are the land and the sea. The best day you ever had was made up of small joys, pleasant business, friendly association with others, good letters, and wholesome thoughts dropped into your mind from here and there. Your worst day was made up of petty annoyances, unpleasant callers, little intimations of unkindness, the sense of unbrotherliness, the feeling of loneliness. So we keep our houses livable by screening out the gnats and flies and turning in a little fresh air and sunshine.

Men become scholarly, great, saintly, and heroic by faithfulness in little things. Behind every such there is an unrecorded chain of common deeds that gradually left a deposit of character capable of the highest achievements. Rebekah gave a drink of water to a slave, and it led to her becoming the mother of a nation and her name being clothed with immortality. Moses drew water for a flock of sheep, and that helped to make for him the spectacular opportunities of Horeb, Egypt, the Red Sea, Mount Sinai, and Pisgah. Years of unselfish considera-

tion for little children gradually built up in the hero of the Titanic the manliness that enabled him to stand on deck and say, "Give the kiddies a chance," and then go down with the ship. If Jesus had been no more than a man, the years of beautiful common deeds to which he gave his life would have made him heroic enough for the cross.

Charles Eaile says:

"Forbid for me an easy place,
O God, in some sequestered nook
Apart to lie
To doze and dream and weaker grow
And less and less to do or know
Until I die!

Give me, O Lord, a task so hard
That all my powers shall taxed be
To do my best;
That I may stronger grow in toil,
For harder service fitted be,
Until I rest!

This my reward—development
From what I am to what thou art.
For this I plead!
Wrought out by being wrought upon
By deeds reflexive, done in love,
For those in need!"

You know we do not have many heroic deeds, but we have one every time there is opportunity for one. There is never lost an opportunity to

risk life to save some one from drowning, from a burning building, an onrushing train, from dying of his wounds in no man's land, or for need of blood transfusion. At every opportunity the man we thought was ordinary leaps forward to the heroic. I tell you, our common duties faithfully done will make heroes of us; and every one of us needs to be a hero though we go to our graves without an opportunity to display our heroism.

The history of this world is the story of demigods, titanic wars, the rise and fall of empires; but the chronicles of heaven are the angel's record of Dorcas and her needle, Martha and her cooking, Mary and her tears, the widow and her mites, the little boy with his lunch basket, the slave girl and her master, the shepherd boy with his harp and sling, the affection of Ruth—along with the story of such mustard-seed acts as breaking bread, visiting jails, nursing the sick, helping an unfortunate neighbor, giving a lift to tired people, kindling a fire for cold people, entertaining strangers, and giving cups of cold water. If God did not keep a record of little things, there would be no biography of nearly all of us; but he numbers the very hairs of our heads and bottles our tears!

I suppose God keeps such a careful record of

all these little things because straws indicate better the direction of the wind than heavier objects. There are so many selfish motives for doing the large, conspicuous, glorious deed. You are not sure about the man who does the large thing. He may be after the praise of men. There is no such temptation in the humble and inconspicuous service. Those who go about doing ordinary neighborly and brotherly kindnesses know they will get no earthly recognition for it and do not think of any heavenly reward. Jesus says that many will enter heaven and be surprised that they are to be rewarded for being kind to their neighbors. But Jesus pledges that "no one who will give the humblest of my disciples even a cup of cold water because he is my disciple, I tell you, can ever fail of his reward."

A marvelous thing it is that God accepts such little deeds to our fellow men as service to himself. We have had such mistaken notions about what to do for God! We have thought we must put foods upon his altar, that we must slay our own children in his presence to please him, that we must submit our bodies to be burned, or that we must build a temple with our gifts. Jesus has taught us better than that. We know now that God does not need anything himself, he only feels the needs of his people.

You remember the story of the poor woman who came crying after Jesus and saying, "Son of David, take pity on me, sir!" When the case was inquired into, it was found that the woman needed nothing herself, but *her daughter* "was dreadfully possessed by a demon." That is exactly what Jesus will mean in that last day when he says to multitudes of ordinary people, "When I was hungry, you gave me food, when I was thirsty you gave me something to drink, when I was a stranger, you invited me to your homes, when I had no clothes, you gave me clothes, when I was sick, you looked after me, and when I was in prison, you came to see me." Of course these people will not understand it even in heaven until it is explained to them: "I tell you, in so far as you did it to one of the humblest of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

Jesus's example and teaching encourage us. Not many can do the large thing. We can do only the small services. Any of us can do nearly everything that Jesus did. If that is so, we can help our fellow men and glorify God. We have not an impossible Christ nor an impossible religion. Anybody who can do no more than give a cup of cold water for the sake of humanity and Jesus can be a follower of Jesus. Of course every one must do all he can do.

We may test our own religion and know for ourselves whether it is genuine and Christian. If we find that we do love our fellow men and are willing to do all we can do for those who need our help, we know by that that we have the mind and spirit of Jesus and have passed from death unto life. That is exactly the test that will be applied to us at the judgment. Jesus has taught us and shown us how to live among our fellow men. We have no excuse. Nothing impossible is required of us. The services required are not above our abilities. The people we are asked to help are bound to us by ties of blood and common interests. Common sense and all the fine instincts of human nature agree with the teaching and example of Jesus; so that the man who stands aloof from human need, and closes his hand and his heart against his fellow man, sins against man, against himself, against truth, and against the greatest Friend man ever had.

Alice Cary writes clearly on this subject:

“I hold that Christian grace abounds
Where charity is seen; that when
We climb to heaven, 'tis on the rounds
Of love to men.

I hold all else named piety
A selfish scheme, a vain pretense;

Where center is not—can there be
Circumference?

'Tis not the wide phylactery,
Nor stubborn fast, nor stated prayers,
That make us saints: we judge the tree
By what it bears.

And when a man can live apart
From works, on theologic trust,
I know the blood about his heart
Is dry as dust."

VIII

JESUS OUR IDEAL IN PRAYER

"He went up on the mountain to pray, and passed the whole night in prayer to God." (Luke 6: 12.)

JESUS was a man of prayer. The Gospels tell of many instances of his praying. He grew up in a home of prayer. He was accustomed to attend the house of prayer. He was praying while John was baptizing him. He spent the whole night praying alone up in a mountain before that morning when he selected his twelve apostles from among his many followers. After feeding the multitude and sending them away, he himself went alone up into the hill to pray. He was praying with Peter, James, and John when his transfiguration occurred. He sometimes arose long before day and went out into a solitary place to pray. He prayed before calling Lazarus out of the grave. The record shows that he prayed in Gethsemane the evening of his betrayal. He prayed as he was being nailed to the cross. He prayed while on the cross. The Gospels do not lay more emphasis on any fact about Jesus than

on the fact that he prayed. Why should Jesus Christ, the Son of God, pray? Because he was also the Son of man; and it is human to pray. Nothing is more natural to man than prayer. As far back as we can trace man we find him praying. Wherever we find man he is praying. All men feel after God, though many feel through the dark. The impulse to pray can be held in check until a man thinks that he has outgrown such a childish thing; but when he faces a crisis and is conscious, the atrophied power of prayer will make another desperate effort to call on God. As long as there is any remnant of a soul left in a man the prayer impulse will be in it. Lost men will pray in the judgment, and damned men will pray in hell.

Prayer is conversation and communion between man and God. It is perfectly natural for men to talk with each other and make requests of each other. The Bible teaches that we are the offspring of God, the children of God. We are divine beings. God, angels, and men belong to the same family. That is why it is perfectly natural for God to speak to men and men to speak to God. Our interests are common. God never talks to us about things that concern him alone, but about things that concern us as well as him. So we do not talk to God about things that concern us alone, but

concern God as well. I think it will help us to pray if we remember that God is already interested in the matter we are praying to him about. "God, who is your Father, knows what you need before you ask him."

Nothing is more important about a man than the impulse and power to pray. That is our way of approach to our Heavenly Father, and the human child cannot afford to live estranged and apart from the Heavenly Father! I am so glad that God does not remain far away from his earthly children and refuse to speak to them. I am equally as glad that we earthly children are not set off to ourselves and forbidden to speak to the Heavenly Father. Then God knows more than we know; and if any man lack wisdom he may ask of God. God also has more power than we have, and he can enable us to do many things that we could not do without him. Then we sin against one another and against God, and it is a privilege to go to God for forgiveness. Then God has a wonderful way of inspiring us, thrilling the mind and soul, and lifting us to intellectual and spiritual heights we could not attain without him.

So in prayer we have communion with God, we gain wisdom from God, we get power from God, we get forgiveness from God, and we get inspiration from God.

We are not surprised that Jesus, the great Teacher, said as much about prayer as about anything else. In the Sermon on the Mount he said that prayer was not a mere public entertainment, where the egotistic, pompous, and self-righteous performer uses many words and repetitions in pretending to tell God some things, but really desiring only to be seen and heard of men. Jesus liked better than that the short cry of the poor fellow who bowed his face into the dust afar off and pleaded, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

Our influence with our fellow men depends upon our attitude toward them and our general character. That is what Jesus said about our influence with God. We have no influence with God if we have the wrong feeling toward him or toward our fellow men.

So Jesus says that when we come to God about a matter we must believe. He does not mean that we must merely believe that God can and will give us what we are asking, but we must believe in the power, wisdom, goodness, and love of God. We must believe in *him*. We must have the right attitude toward God. We sometimes believe in all of God but his wisdom. We are afraid he does not know as much about the matter as we do, and we insist on having him do our way.

Then Jesus says that we must have the right attitude toward our fellow men. God never takes the part of any member of his family against any other member of his family. He does not tolerate ill will in one of us toward a brother. So Jesus says, "When you pray, forgive." There is no promise that God will pay any attention to our prayers as long as we are at outs with a fellow man. Jesus says that if we get to the altar, and then remember that our brother has anything against us, we are to get up and go and get right with that brother, then come back and pray. That calls to mind what the psalmist said: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

Jesus says that another requirement to successful praying is that we "abide in him." That means intimate living with Jesus Christ. That means knowing him. That means being his friend. That means the kind of a life that Paul was talking about when he said, "The life I am now living in the body I am living by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." We do not expect to have great power and influence with even a man unless we know him well and are on good terms with him. John was so close to Jesus that he could talk to him about matters which the other disciples dared not mention.

Jesus also says that if his words "abide in you" you can pray successfully. That means not only that we know what he has said, but that we are obedient to what he says. We could not expect to have much influence with God if we are violating his commandments, refusing to do what he asks, and doing what he forbids. A man cannot have influence with the President of the United States if he is breaking the law of the land and fighting the administration.

Jesus teaches us that we may pray about anything. That is natural. If you can talk to a man about a matter, you may talk to God about it. Let us be assured that anything that concerns us concerns God also. So Jesus encourages us to talk to God about "anything." It may be a small matter, but the Father who numbers the hairs on the heads of his children welcomes us to talk with him about the smallest matters. That is the way Paul understood Jesus, for he says, "Have no anxiety about anything, but make all your wants known to God in prayer and entreaty, and with thanksgiving."

Of course Jesus prayed most for the supremely important things; and that is the way he would have us to pray. We cannot afford to spend our energies on mere trifles; and certainly

we cannot afford to use up much of the privilege of prayer talking about small matters when there are so many great subjects to discuss with God. In prayer, as in other things, we should "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." It is poor neighborliness to call on your neighbor only when you wish some accommodation. That is a sorry child who does not speak to father except when asking for something. So he is a rather sorry child of God who never goes to God except to ask for some material or temporal accommodation.

In the model prayer which Jesus gave us, only one material thing is asked for, and that is simply bread. The other subjects mentioned are the great matters, matters of supreme importance to God and to us. That prayer properly prayed by the right kind of a person will always be fully answered.

The disciples were so impressed with Jesus's power in prayer that they asked him to teach them to pray. It must have been a wonderful joy to them for Jesus to authorize them to pray in his name. He told them they could go to God, through him, and talk to God about anything they pleased in his name. It is wonderful that Jesus is interested in every matter we would like to pray about, and that he is willing

to be quoted by us when we are talking to the Father, and that he authorizes us to sign his name to our petitions. A man can always begin his prayer about anything with the assurance that he has at least one friend at the right hand of God.

Then it is further assuring to know that Jesus himself prays for us. He prayed specially for Peter at least one time. He prayed a great deal for that group of twelve whom he chose to be his apostles. He prays for all who believe on him through the preaching of the gospel. Since he has ascended to the right hand of the Father, he is still our advocate and prays for us.

So prayer is natural. Jesus prayed because it is human and natural to pray. If we are right with God and men, we may talk to God about anything that concerns us, and we may sign Jesus's name to any of our petitions.

If that is true, why is it that we do not get everything we ask for? God is good, God is kind, God is able; then why do we not get everything we ask for?

Well, I said that prayer is a conversation between man and God and is very much like a conversation between two men. Your banker advertises for your business. He asks that you come right in and talk to him about your busi-

ness matters. He has money that he would like to loan you. He wants you to prosper, and he is glad to help you prosper. He accommodates you in every possible way in consistency with the safety of the bank, if you can meet a few simple conditions. You must show good faith, you must show that you are trustworthy, you must show that you will work, you must put up collateral that will secure the bank. You can see that a good bank that has plenty of capital, and is officered by good men, and is advertising for business, might not be able to do everything you might ask. You might not understand your proposed business venture quite so well as your banker. A good banker will often keep his friends out of trouble by refusing to loan them the money they ask for.

Your doctor may be too good a friend to you to do for you just what you think he should do. When you go to a doctor it usually is best not to diagnose your own case and prescribe for yourself just to show the doctor how much you know. Let him do that. Talk to him as frankly as you can, tell him how you feel and where you hurt; then let his greater knowledge and skill have a chance to diagnose and prescribe. Your dear old family physician sees best often to refuse to do just what you think he ought to do.

The best friend you have in the world, the man who would die for you, will not always do everything you ask him to do; just as you will not always do for him everything he thinks you ought to do.

In other words: when you go to God in prayer, you are talking to a good Father, a wealthy Father, a mighty Father, and a *wise Father*. No man has a right to pray who is not willing to risk the judgment of God and, after stating his own fervent desire, say in conclusion, "Thy will be done." A man ought to wish for the wisdom and will of God on every matter. Much of our disappointment in prayer lies in the fact that we think God showed poor judgment. We must trust the wisdom of God as we do the other parts of his nature.

We must not think that prayer is a sort of Aladdin's lamp which we can rub and thereby get what we wish. Think what sort of a world this would be if each had such an easy way of getting his own selfish wish in every matter. That would be an impossible world. Your home would become an impossibility if you undertook to do everything that your eight disagreeing and antagonistic children simultaneously ask. The father of such a family should allow each child to talk out matters with him, but he should use his own

best judgment in the care and government of the home.

Then we make a mistake when we think there is nothing to do but ask. It would not be good for us to get everything at so low a price. It is all right to ask, but we should also seek and knock. A man is an intellectual being, and he must think as well as talk. Man is a physical being, and there is something for his body to do. The threefold man—body, mind, spirit—should work together. If I need something, I should not send the hands off alone to work for it while mind and body sit down and do nothing. If I need something, I should not send the mind out to think it up while the body and spirit sit down and do nothing. If I need something, I should not send the soul off alone to ask for it while the mind and body sit down and do nothing. Let the whole man stand together on the proposition and ask, think, and work.

Millions of as good people as this world ever saw prayed for poor Floyd Collins down in Sand Cave over in Kentucky, but they could not pray him out from under that rock, and out through that long dark tunnel, and he died there. Why couldn't we pray him out?

It was right to pray for his deliverance. It would have been inhuman and unnatural for us not to pray; but there were other things to

be done that we were not able to do quick enough. You cannot move a mountain of dirt off a man simply by breathing a fervent wish to God any more than contractors can cut tunnels for railroads by asking God to do it. Here was a great case for men to pray about, think about, and work at; and, thank God, the people of this country did all this. I think God heard every prayer. I think he helped those engineers to think. I think he strengthened those miners to endure and dig. I think he stirred up philanthropists to send money. I think he fired the hearts of physicians to rush to the spot and offer their help. I think God was everywhere urging the magnificent people of this nation to get into the great fight for the rescue of Floyd Collins. We tried, and some of the most wonderful **work** ever done in this world was done around Sand Cave, but we did not get to him quite soon enough.

I suppose God could have miraculously moved that mountain off Floyd Collins; but that is not God's way of doing things. He has never done many miracles, and we cannot depend on them. God's way of doing things is through people. He honors us by calling for our help. "We are laborers together with God." If you want corn, you had better go out in the field and work with God. The

scientist tells us that God does ninety-five per cent of the work in making a crop of corn; but he will not do anything unless some man goes into the field and works with him.

It is that way in everything. God is in the room with the sick. It is our duty to pray for the sick and visit the sick. God invites us to go into the sick room with him. But it will not do to forsake God and leave him alone to look after the sick. God wants *us* in the fight for the sick man. He wants the doctor, the nurse, the hospital, the surgeon's implements, the medicines. He put the medicines here, and he gave the doctors their talents and skill; and we honor God by using them; and we dishonor him by not using them. I have witnessed many wonderful cures where I felt sure God had done about ninety-five per cent of the healing; but, at the same time, I felt morally certain that I would not have witnessed those marvelous cures if the hospital and the nurses and the doctors had not done their little five per cent of the work for them.

One of the greatest displays of faith we have on record is Abraham's offering up of his only son, Isaac. That was not a mere spiritual act. Abraham was thinking while he was believing. And while his soul was rising in the majestic spiritual act of faith, his feet were trudging

along to the awful spot where the sacrifice was to be made, and his shoulders were bending under the load of the material to be used in the solemn service.

No act of man is whole and splendid and efficient into which he does not put his whole being—body, mind, spirit. Man can do no greater thing than pray; but prayer is not a great thing until the whole being is put into it. No man has a right to ask God to do a thing that he himself is not willing to help God do.

Paul says God is able to do for us "above all that we ask or think." I suppose that is what God did in Floyd Collins's case. We asked to have his body released from the rocks and his life spared to this world. Before he made that last trip into the cave he told some friends that he dreamed that he was caught under a rock and angels came and took him away. To the heroic friends who made several trips down to him he said: "If the men don't get me out of here, the angels will." I suppose that is what they did; and, if so, that was a greater rescue than we were trying to work.

Paul was great in prayer. However, he could not pray the trouble out of his side; but he kept praying about it until he got grace to endure it. An extra supply of grace may be worth more to us than the relief we ask for.

Jesus says, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Of course we do not know, and we are yet incapable of knowing. Eternity is going to be very interesting in the new and fuller knowledge we shall get.

God does nearly everything we ask him to do just as we suggest. Generally our judgment and God's judgment, our wills and God's will, agree; and when that is the case we are likely to get the identical thing we ask for. When we remember that there are a billion and a half human beings on the earth, and no two of them alike, each appealing to God for his individual need, it is wonderful that every one nearly always gets what he asks for. There ought to be so much gratitude for answers to prayer that we would forget that we did not get everything we asked for.

Anyway, we never break with a friend because he does not always see as we do and does not always do the thing we suggest. Let us be at least humanly considerate of the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

IX

JESUS OUR IDEAL IN LOVE

"See how much he loved him!" (John 11: 36.)

FOR some time it had been unsafe for Jesus to be around Jerusalem, for the Jews down there had threatened to stone him. So he and his disciples were preaching over in Perea. One day he got a message from Bethany about three miles from Jerusalem, which read this way, "Master, your friend is sick." That message was from Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus; and it was Lazarus that was sick.

You remember that Jesus did not go at once to Bethany, but waited until the third day; and when he got there Lazarus had been dead some time. When the sisters and their friends led him to the grave, "Jesus wept." That is the shortest verse in the Bible, but it tells us more than most of the longer verses. The tears on the face of Jesus told everybody in that group that Jesus loved Lazarus. Tears are more eloquent than words. They are the words of the heart.

We keep ever in mind the classic friendship

stories of Jonathan and David and Damon and Pythias. I read the other day just as good a story of two friends in Ireland. Mr. O'Higgins and Mr. O'Connor had been the closest friends from youth. O'Connor had been best man at O'Higgins's wedding. But during that recent bitter struggle in Ireland these two friends were led by their convictions into rival camps. O'Higgins's party triumphed, and he was made Minister of Home Affairs. O'Connor was arrested and convicted of a war action that had cost many lives. The court assessed the penalty of death. It was the duty of O'Higgins, as Minister of Home Affairs, to sign the death warrant of his best friend. Justice demanded death, friendship pleaded for life; but O'Higgins could find no just way to save his best friend, and he had to sign the death warrant. After the execution it was found that O'Connor had willed all his property to his lifelong friend, O'Higgins, who signed his death warrant.

The life of Jesus is a beautiful story of "a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Lazarus and his two sisters were very special friends of Jesus, and he seems to have been much in their little home. Long before the incident of the text Jesus was in the home one day, and Martha was worried with the kitchen and dining-room duties, while Mary was en-

joying a conversation with Jesus. I think Mary was so happy in her talk with Jesus that she just forgot that there was any household drudgery to be looked after; and I think Martha wanted so much to join in that conversation that she just could not be patient with the pots and pans.

Jesus was the guest of these three friends all during Passion Week. Six days before his betrayal these friends gave a dinner for him and his disciples. It was at this time that Mary poured the costly ointment on the feet of Jesus and wiped them with her hair. From this little home he went into Jerusalem in that triumphal procession when the enthusiastic people spread their garments in his path. From that home he went again the next morning to drive the merchants and money changers out of the temple which they had converted into a den of thieves. So he went each morning from Bethany to Jerusalem, where he spent the day delivering those great messages, and returned to Bethany in the evening. He did not get back to Bethany on Thursday evening, because he stayed in Jerusalem to eat the Passover supper with his disciples, and after the supper he was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane. However, forty days after the resurrection, he led his disciples out to Bethany for his sep-

aration and ascension, as if the home of these loving friends were the most fitting step to heaven.

Christianity is called the *Law of Love*. It is the kingdom of God. There are only two articles in the constitution of this kingdom. They are:

1. "You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul, and your whole mind."

2. "You must love your neighbor as you do yourself."

All duties to ourselves, to our fellow men, and to God are based on this constitution. No act of man is what it should be unless it is consistent with and inspired by this constitution. Paul says, "Love fully satisfies the law." Of course this law cannot be observed in mere words or sentiment, but must be observed in reality and truth. Men must *do* what the law of love commands.

Jesus's preaching was comment on this law of love, and his life was an illustration of the law of love.

Jesus told Nicodemus that "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that no one who believes in him should be lost, but that they should all have eternal life." Love planned the salvation of men. Knowl-

edge, holiness, power, and all other divine attributes enter into the plan of salvation; but God's love for men was the great moving cause and inspiration back of the whole plan. And that great Heart continues to love men; for there is no slowing down of the plan of salvation. The heralds of the gospel are increasing, and the good tidings get a wider hearing every day. The Church Jesus organized to carry this gospel reaches new territory every day. The kingdom of God is continually gaining upon all the other kingdoms and is destined to embrace all other kingdoms. The kingdom of God will continue to conquer in this world until the *Divine Heart of Love* grows too cold to inspire men to preach the gospel and build churches.

Jesus came into the world to carry out the plan of salvation which the love of the Father had inspired; and he acted in all things under that same inspiration. He told his disciples: "I have loved you just as the Father has loved me. . . . No one can show greater love than by giving up his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you to do."

In fact, Jesus revealed the love of God. Until Jesus came men thought more about the other attributes of God than about his love; but Jesus talked a great deal more about the

love of God than about his wisdom and power and holiness. Jesus brought the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. Nobody had called God "Father" before. Jesus taught men to say "Our Father." People still are not getting that great doctrine except where the preachers of Christ's gospel go. Of course the corresponding doctrine that goes with the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God is the doctrine of the brotherhood of man. Jesus has taught us that men are brothers. In the philosophy of Jesus, all men are the offspring of God in a direct and natural sense.

Now the plan of salvation is to put into men the law of love and get men to act from the motive and constraint of love, just as the Heavenly Father and the divine Son do. Jesus said, "The command that I give you is to love one another just as I have loved you." A man is saved when he gets that kind of a heart. He has had the divine image restored in his soul and shows his kinship with the Father and Jesus and all high members of the heavenly family. He has had the new birth. He has come back into the spiritual family where he naturally belongs and from which he had strayed. John put it this way: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because

we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love is still in death."

It is easy to love men and God when you get into the kingdom of God and under the law of love. It is not easy outside. In fact, men standing on the outside regard the law of love as an impossibility. It is so different from the law of selfishness under which sin has led us. A man's transition from the law of selfishness to the law of love is like a new birth, like passing from one world into another. It was impossible for Judas to waste a box of ointment on Jesus. He was clear out of the realm where such things are done. In the world where he lived selfishness is the law; and under that law men like to carry the bag and put their hands in it. It was equally impossible for that woman who had had such a great forgiveness to withhold the costly ointment. The forgiveness of her great sins had made a new woman of her, and left her in a new kingdom under the law of love.

Why, in the kingdom of God you can love your enemies. That is an impossibility outside. You can do good to people who spitefully use you. You can turn the other cheek. You can do all those ridiculous things that Jesus told us to do because all things are possible with God. A man is a new creature, in a new

world, under a new law. He has an inspiring example and a Friend to help him.

Jesus could love his enemies and pray for those who were nailing him to the cross because he knew they did not understand. They had never been in his world. They had never lived under his law. He could forgive them, no matter what they said about him or did to him.

But love is neither weakness nor cowardice. God is love, but he is not weak nor cowardly. Love never is so. Jesus was not weak nor cowardly. He delivered his message without apology. He did his work in the open. He was too manly to let hypocrites deceive themselves or anybody else, and the work of snatching off their false faces may seem to some a little rough, but he loved even those men. He was not much of a pacifist when he went into the temple with whip and ran out the traders who had set up their thievish dens in the house of prayer; but he died for even these men.

Jesus called for help to preach his gospel, build his Church, and save the world of men; but he requires that all these helpers have this motive and inspiration of love. You remember how he tested Peter at that point. He asked Peter three times in quick succession, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Only after

Peter's positive and repeated assurance that he did was he authorized to try to get grown people and little children into the kingdom of God. God is love. The law of his kingdom is love. The man who does not love does not know God; and of course he does not know how to bring others into the kingdom of God. Paul's explanation of his own missionary passion was, "It is Christ's love that controls me."

The gospel is intended for all races of men, and the followers of Jesus are to take it to them. Nothing but the feeling of brotherhood will enable men to do that, and nothing but the love of God will give us the sense of brotherhood. So Jesus knows that we are not real missionaries nor efficient workers anywhere in his Church unless we have become fired with this divine passion and are living under the law of love ourselves.

Jesus found that much of the work to be done in this world is of a lowly sort. He did things that most of us shrink from. He knew his followers would find many repulsive cases of need, and he did not want them to pass by these cases. After the last supper Jesus sought especially to impress his disciples with the duty of condescending to lowly services. He took a basin of water and a towel and went all around the group and washed the feet of the

disciples. Then he said to them: "If I then, your Master and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet too." John, who tells this story, is careful to tell us that this act was inspired by love. "He had loved those who were his own in the world, and he loved them to the last." Well, it takes great love for our brother man to make us stoop and minister to his lowly needs.

The love of Christ purchases for the poor the things they otherwise would not have. It carries them bread when they could not get it otherwise. It opens the hospital to them when they could not otherwise get in. It brings the doctor and the nurse which they could not hire. The living Christ reincarnated in other men and women still moves about doing good.

"The healing of his seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again."

Being the exact opposite of selfishness, love is self-sacrificing. Self-denial is one of the laws of this kingdom of God. Jesus said that he did not come to the world to do his own will, but the will of the Father who sent him. He did not spare and shield his own life, but invested it in the purchase of more abundant life

for men. That is the way of love. It never considers itself, but those who are loved. We see love doing that every day.

Love is the great sufferer. It is the most sensitive thing in the world. It is so easily touched. It is easily wounded and bleeds at every wound; but it never gives up. "Love is patient and kind. Love is not envious or boastful. It does not put on airs. It is not rude. It does not insist on its rights. It does not become angry. It is not resentful. It is not happy over injustice, it is only happy with truth. It will bear anything, believe anything, hope for anything, endure anything. Love will never die out."

The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is Paul's presentation of the Christian doctrine of love; and it is sometimes called Paul's portrait of Jesus, because Jesus is more like that chapter than anybody else has been.

We see in Jesus how love grades up through all the relations of life. He is a beautiful example of filial love. I know we thought so while we were studying his childhood. Then he is a perfect model of that form of love we call friendship. His friendship for Lazarus, Mary, Martha, and John was as personal, as natural, as human as that of Damon and Pythias. Then he is a perfect ideal of that form of love we call

fellowship. He entered into the same loving fellowship with the twelve and others who helped him in his great cause that all of us united in his service should feel. He is also a perfect pattern of that form of love we call brotherhood. He shows us how to be brothers to all men. Finally, he is our ideal in spiritual love—love for God. He shows us the attitude to take toward God. He teaches us how to be sons of God.

We get from Jesus the fact that the ruling passion all through life should be love. Each form of love just mentioned is a part of the great religion of love—the love of a child for parents, the love of a friend for a friend, the love of one Church worker for another, the great feeling of brotherhood toward men, as well as the sense of divine sonship. Jesus is complete in each form of love. We are complete Christians when we experience these great loves.

“O perfect life of love!
All, all is finished now;
All he left his throne above
To do for us below.”

X

JESUS OUR IDEAL IN OPTIMISM

"I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not subdue it." (Matt. 16: 18.)

OPTIMISM is the disposition to look on the bright side and take the most hopeful view of things. Pessimism is the disposition to look on the dark side and take the least hopeful view of things.

Jesus is an optimist. No one is so well acquainted with the evils in this world as he is. No other one has suffered so much sorrow over the world's pitiable plight. He recognizes that the difficulty of improving the situation is so great that no mere human agency can do it, and that only the supreme power of God operating patiently through long ages of grace can save the world. Yet he looks on the hopeful side. He believes something can be done, though at infinite cost. So he set about the task and keeps on at it after two thousand years!

Jesus has had to contend against a dominant unbelief and pessimism in the human race. Most men do not believe they can improve.

Most men have no courage or power to struggle upward. Always and everywhere the vast majority have settled down in hopeless consent to their low and lost estate. That is the case still, after two thousand years of Christian appeal. How few are yet awake to their possibilities! Nearly all men are asleep or dead to the better things, and the most difficult thing in the world is to wake them.

We are not much surprised at this hopelessness in the masses when we find so much pessimism in the leaders and philosophers of the race. In this twentieth century scholarly men are writing books to prove that the condition of the human race is growing steadily worse all the time. They point back hundreds of years and picture the good old days to show us how far downward we have drifted. We can trace that spirit of pessimism back for six thousand years.

While St. Paul was preaching a glad gospel of salvation all over the Roman Empire, the great Roman philosopher Seneca was ashamed of mankind because they crowded theater buildings for frivolous entertainment, while very few could be induced to attend lectures on "What is a good man?" and "How to become a good man." The Greek poet Hesiod, eight hundred years before Christ, was overwhelmed

with the avarice, injustice, strife, and hopelessness of men; and he prayed to Zeus to smite the earth with his destructive thunderbolts. A thousand years before Christ the leaders of the race thought things were growing steadily worse and went about inquiring, "What is the cause that the former days were better than these?" In the Imperial Museum at Constantinople there is an Egyptian inscription said to date four thousand years before Christ which reads as follows: "Our earth is degenerate in these latter days. There are signs that the world is coming to an end. Children no longer obey their parents. Everybody wants to write a book. The end of the world is manifestly drawing nigh."

So in every age. Leaders, poets, historians, philosophers, statesmen, teachers, and preachers have been so impressed with the badness of things that they could see no escape from doom. Literature is full of their dark sayings. The other great religions of mankind are colored with hopelessness.

All the hope the world has had for two thousand years has come from Jesus. His gospel is full of it. He taught that God is good, that God is love, and that God is working at the problem of human redemption. He said that God is building a kingdom of righteousness in

this world that will ultimately take in all the other kingdoms of this world, and that there will eventually come a condition of brotherhood, good will, righteousness, and knowledge of God that will cover the whole earth as the waters cover the sea.

He preaches faith in God and tells us that will save us and save our world. How he dwells upon the ability and disposition of God to do good and save from low conditions! Over and over he said and illustrated, "Anything is possible for God." His great aim seems to be to turn men from dependence upon human weakness to divine power. As Christ diagnoses the world's condition, our trouble lies in the fact that nearly all men try to live without conscious dependence upon God and obedience to him.

Jesus knows that the world is just as bad as anybody ever said it is, but he says that God loves it enough to give his only begotten Son for it and that the only begotten Son loves it enough to lay down his life for it. Taking that as a basis, Jesus preaches an optimistic gospel and tries to get the hopeless masses of humanity to wake up and believe in God, in humanity, in truth, in work, in righteousness, in joy, in immortality, and everything. He

wants men to take a general attitude of hopefulness and optimism.

Why, most people do not believe there is any truth. They have heard so many things that are contradictory! Things they once thought true are proved false! They go about asking cynically, "What is truth?" But Jesus says there is truth and that we shall know it and shall be made free by it. He makes himself the champion of truth and tries to stir men up to follow him in the discovery of truth. The clearest spot in the world to-day is right around the feet of Jesus. He is truly the light of the world.

Another trouble with men is, they do not believe in themselves. They do not believe they can do anything or be anything. They do not know that there are any possibilities in themselves. Jesus is trying to correct that impression. He tells us we have talents—one, two, five. How he tries to get men to invest and multiply their talents! Every man who believes what Jesus tells him about himself and follows Jesus's advice about the use of talents comes to a greater self than he had ever dreamed that he possessed. There is something in men! The most unpromising specimens of men have become the most outstanding representatives

of the race! There is something in men. Jesus believes in men!

Then men are generally discouraged about their work. There is so much to be done! There are so many hindrances. There are so many things to undo what we do. Tares get in the wheat fields. Thorns choke out what we plant. The sun burns up our crops. Insects eat up the fruits of our toil. Thieves break through and steal. The human disposition is to quit. But Jesus believes in work. He says: "My Father is still at work, and I work too." He said that in spite of thorns, and rocks, and burning heat we could make at least thirty-fold and sometimes sixty or a hundred. He was glad to see men turning from their idling on the street corners and going out to the fields to work. He wants to keep the race busy and hopeful in their work. As he sees it, men can still enjoy a great reward of toil, and we ought to keep at work.

And most men think the devil is in charge of matters in this old world. They think that right is hopelessly down. It seems to them that injustice and oppression and wrong have always been dominant and that there is no way to break their tyranny.

"Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne."

But Jesus says, "I saw Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning!" He meant by that to assure his hearers that the power of Satan is already broken. Jesus met Satan frequently in his earthly ministry and was every time more than his match. He has definitely taken up the fight against all enemies of the human race and vows to reign until he has put all these enemies under his feet. He pledges to bring in a better day even in this world. Jesus believes in the possibility of a good world.

Nothing but the invisible presence of the optimistic Jesus has kept up the faith of his Church. It takes the hardest work in the world to keep the Church moving onward and upward. You have got to go against the persistent downward tendency and drift of the race. You have got to keep it alive amid the general deadness. Often the crew of the ship are so disabled or mutinous that the ship seems doomed. The bravest men the world has known are the faithful few who have saved the ship in such perilous times.

The history of the Church in the past two thousand years is a story of backslidings and revivals. Our history has been marred by multitudes of unworthy men in the Church and by unholy councils, doctrines, and acts sanctioned officially by the Church. The task of

our Lord is to keep his Church awake, alive, right, and forging ahead. Many times the death of the Church has been prophesied, and sometimes it has been pronounced dead. But Jesus has always moved among the remnant, stirred to action, and started a still more wonderful revival. For two thousand years he has kept his pledge that "the powers of death shall not subdue it."

It is wonderful that after two thousand years Jesus keeps up his enthusiasm and optimism! And he does! For the moment Jesus quits calling and inspiring preachers, and takes his invisible spirit from the headship of the Church, the normal pessimism of humanity will reassert itself, and the Church will be dead. It cannot live without his constant inspiration. It is built on faith. Faith is the exact opposite of the natural pessimism of mankind. Jesus preaches and inspires that faith, and when he ceases to do so our faith will be dead, and we will all lapse into hopelessness.

Christianity is hope. If we can believe the things Jesus says about everything, we are bound to be optimists. It is wonderful to have one talk to us as he does about God, truth, work, humanity, life, righteousness, death, resurrection, immortality, and everything! Are those things so?

No wonder Christianity is a religion of song, painting, sculpture, poetry, refinement, culture, learning, science, civilization, life, and all high and fine things. Christianity brings men out of that state of unbelief and pessimism into the glorious realm of believing in God, man, and everything!

Why, Jesus was happy himself. He was acquainted with grief. He had sorrow. Conditions he found among men caused pain in his spirit. But how he did rejoice in truth, love, power, in the possibilities he saw in men, in the prospective triumph of his kingdom! It was not the kind of peace and joy that we get out of temporary gratification, but a joy that comes from these great assurances.

XI

JESUS OUR IDEAL IN DEATH

"When he had assumed human form, he still further humbled himself and carried his obedience so far as to die, and to die upon the cross." (Phil. 2: 8.)

DEATH is an event in human existence as natural and necessary as birth. One of the laws under which the human race has been from the beginning is, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The writer in Hebrews says, "Men are destined to die." This is one law that is universally observed.

Jesus was voluntarily subject to every law that men are under. He tasted both our life and our death, so that he knows now what it is to live in a world like this and what it is to die. To make sure that he should know the utmost horrors of physical death, he submitted to crucifixion, which is the most painful form of death.

Death is the separation of soul and body. The soul leaves the body because the body is so diseased, or worn, or broken that the soul can no longer use it. The heart fails, the lungs

are consumed, the blood is poisoned, or some shock shatters the body beyond use.

That is the reason the dead do not communicate with us. They have no instrument through which to express themselves to us. If we take the piano away from Paderewski, he is still a great man with the knowledge and skill of a musician, but he cannot give expression to his genius, for he has no instrument. Augustus Lukeman is a great sculptor capable of making heroic stone cavalymen ride across the face of Stone Mountain, but if we deprive him of his tools he cannot express his art.

Our bodies are the instruments of our souls. With the eye the soul sees, with the ear the soul hears, with the tongue the soul speaks, with the hand the soul works, with the whole marvelous physical machine the soul expresses its wonderful life and varied talents so that other people know what manner of soul he is. But if the eyes go out, and the ears grow deaf, and the tongue is paralyzed, and the hand loses its power, and the whole body ceases to function, the soul is deprived of all its instruments and cannot do anything in the physical realm to make itself known to friends in the flesh.

As Heifetz deprived of his violin would still be a living soul with all his artistic gifts, though silent, so Woodrow Wilson deprived of his body

is still a statesmanlike soul, though he does not speak and write any more. Death is simply the breaking down of the physical instrument so that the spiritual man cannot use it any longer. We know nothing of the music in another soul except by the instrument through which he sings.

Here is a great man. He is highly developed intellectually, morally, and spiritually; and he has a splendid body. One of his fine eyes becomes diseased and the oculist removes it. The real man remains the great soul he was. The other eye fails. The great soul remains intact and dictates a great literary production like "Paradise Lost." He loses his hearing; but, blind and deaf, he still wields his pen and gives the world the choice fruit of a living soul. The hand becomes paralyzed, and the great man asks his daughter to write as he speaks, and another great book is produced. The tongue becomes paralyzed, but the great soul uses his foot to write his thoughts on the floor and proves that he still lives. Finally, every physical power fails. There is nothing left through which this great soul can express himself. He must leave the stage, like the violinist whose last string is broken; but the great man himself still lives, and thinks, and knows, and aspires, and learns.

We have many remarkable proofs that great souls do live with the most meager physical equipment. The eye is the finest instrument of the soul, and the ear is next in importance. Ordinarily the soul depends almost wholly upon these two. That being true, our first thought of an infant totally blind and deaf would be that there is almost no possibility of a living soul there; but the case of Helen Keller, and many others, proves that a soul may enjoy an abundant life with only the most limited physical equipment. That is at least an indication that the soul is not dependent upon the body for continued life and consciousness.

It is unreasonable to think that a man is dead just because his body is dead. We do not reason that way about God. His body dies, but God lives on. This physical universe is his body. A tree dies, but the living spirit of God grows another tree. A whole planet dies, but the living God builds another planet. Death is constantly going on in every part of this vast body of God, but God lives on in undimmed glory and undiminished power. That is the logical view to take of man. Death is going on in his little physical world all the time, and finally his entire world will die, but his creative powers may be busy building another.

Richard Watson Gilder says:

"Call me not dead when I, indeed, have gone
Into the company of the ever-living
High and most glorious poets! Let thanksgiving
Rather be made. Say: "He at last hath won
Rest and release, converse supreme and wise,
Music and song and light of immortal faces."

Death is as important to man as birth. As the unborn child cannot afford to refuse his birth, so a man cannot afford to refuse his death, which is only another birth into another world.

While we are young and the world is new to us, we may think that we would like to stay here forever; but in less than a hundred years we are sure to change our minds and join in the song,

"I would not live alway; I ask not to stay
Where storm after storm rises dark o'er the way:
The few lurid mornings that dawn on us here
Are enough for life's woes, full enough for its cheer."

There is no other way to the greater world and life than through the gate of death. We are always timid about going through a new gate. It may be that we fear death only because we do not know what it is. Those who come close to it, and those who are passing through it, do not seem to be afraid of it. As Mary Mapes Dodge says,

"The child who enters life comes not with knowledge or intent;
So those who enter death must go as little children sent.
Nothing is known. But I believe that God is over-head;
And as life is to the living, so death is to the dead."

Jesus regarded death as a very important process in the fullest development of a human soul. He thought of death for himself as a means to his glory. Speaking to his own disciples one day, he said: "The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it remains just one grain. But if it dies, it yields a great harvest." That was his way of saying that if a man would pass from this small and cramped life into the larger and freer life he must submit to the mysterious process of death just as the small dry seed does.

Men would never have discovered the power and glory and divinity of Jesus if he had not died. No matter how long he might have lived nor how splendidly he might have wrought, in the esteem of men he would have remained simply like other living men. But how wonderfully death magnified and glorified the life of Jesus! Immediately after his death he began that meteoric sweep beyond all human

and earthly limitations, on to that name which is above every name!

Will death do that for us? Paul says it will. His astonishing philosophy of death given to us in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians is exactly the same as the death-glorifying doctrine of Jesus. He says, "You foolish man, the very seed you sow never comes to life without dying first." Then he sweeps on with a convincing argument to show that "this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality."

Paul conceives that there is a glorious world and an infinite life for which these poor bodies are entirely inadequate. Our bodies are barely sufficient for a brief career in this little world. They wear out and break down with few years' use at simple service. They would be like dungeons and chains to us in that higher world and larger life. We must have bodies there that will "flourish in immortal youth." Every faculty of that "glorious body" must be equal to an infinite and eternal career.

So, Paul does not regard death as a calamity, but a convenience; not a tragedy, but a triumph; not a defeat, but a victory. It is a process of putting off a material robe for the garments of the spiritual; a laying aside the

cheap instruments of our apprenticeship in order to take up the finer tools of our real career.

I like Harry Kemp's suggestion that the dead are so alive that they do not know that they are dead

"He did not know that he was dead;
He walked along the crowded street,
Smiled, tipped his hat, nodded his head
To friends he chanced to meet.

And yet they passed quietly by
With an unknowing, level stare;
They met him with an abstract eye
As if he were the air.

'Some sorry thing has come to pass,'
The dead man thought; he hurried home
And found his wife before a glass,
Dallying with a comb.

He found his wife all dressed in black;
He kissed her mouth, he stroked her head.
'Men act so strange since I've come back
From over there,' he said.

She spoke no word; she only smiled.
But now he heard her say his name,
And saw her study, grief-beguiled,
His picture in a frame.

Then he remembered that black night
And the great shell-burst, wide and red,
The sudden plunging into light,
And knew that he was dead."

Jesus did not rebel against death. He died voluntarily. He said of his life: "No one has taken it from me, but I am giving it of my own accord. I have power to give it, and I have power to take it back again." That is the majestic assurance of an unconquerable soul! It takes a great soul to die magnificently, and the most magnificent scenes ever witnessed on this earth have been the brave strides of the great through the portals of death.

"Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud:
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how straight the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul!"

Jesus kept his eyes open to the fact of death. He talked about his own approach to it. It

was the theme of conversation with him and Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was a subject he freely and easily discussed when among his intimate friends. He prepared himself and his disciples and his work for the great event.

Jesus never thought of himself as the helpless victim of merciless death. He was the active master in all that "valley and shadow." He had spoken of his death as something he must "accomplish." He was not going to be killed. He was going to die.

Others might fix the stage. Others might stand around and look upon the scene. Dying was his own act, and he would "accomplish" that as efficiently as he had all his other work.

After tasting death for every man by drinking the utmost refinement of pain and draining off the very dregs of suffering; when every nerve was shattered and his whole body aflame with fever; when the heart had broken and all the blood was spilled—then this ideal in death said, "Father, I intrust my spirit to your hands." His final and triumphant words were, "It is finished."

That was a death "accomplished." Into that glorious achievement Jesus threw all the magnificent powers of his great personality. He could not afford a mean death. It had to

be a worthy death, though upon a dishonoring cross. He had to be as great in his dying as in his living. He could not weaken and fail in this important event. In all the history of the race, no finer thing has been done than the dying Jesus did on the cross. Jean Paul Richter was right when he said that in that splendid act Jesus "lifted with his pierced hands empires off their hinges, and turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages."

So may each of us "accomplish" his death! It is important to die well. It is our last testimony to earth. It is our final exhibition of strength in this world.

"So live that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him and lies down to pleasant dreams."

XII

JESUS OUR IDEAL IN THE RESURRECTION

"Christ was raised from the dead, the first to be raised of those who have fallen asleep." (1 Cor. 15: 20.)

SOME time before his death Jesus said: "I am giving my life, but giving it to take it back again." No act of his three years' ministry was quite so masterful as his death. It was an achievement, and he finished it in such a splendid way that the officers in charge of the execution said to one another, "He surely must have been a Son of God."

Jerusalem might have expected to see Jesus again! One who can march unconquered through the agonies of such a death is capable of coming back.

To the disciples, the resurrection of Jesus was a matter of such certainty that they faced the skepticism and scorn of the world to tell the incredible story; and they told it so consistently, so persistently, so truthfully, so fervently that men as intellectual and antagonistic as Saul of Tarsus were compelled to accept the story and become followers of the risen Christ.

"Why do you all think it incredible that God should raise the dead?" asks Paul. Yet it remains to this day the most amazing proposition ever submitted to men.

Belief in the immortality of the soul is natural and universal. We find it mingled with the superstitions of the savage and with the creeds of twentieth-century scientists. "Men like Sir Oliver Lodge in natural science, Prof. William James in psychology, Prof. Hermann Lotze in philosophy, and Dr. William Osler in medicine have thought it reasonable to cherish hopes of immortality."

"It must be so. Plato, thou reasonest well!
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread and inward horror
Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself and startles at destruction?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis Heaven itself that points out a hereafter
And intimates eternity to man."

While, in the nature of the case, the immortality of the soul may not be demonstrated like a problem in mathematics or physics, the arguments for it are so reasonable that the most scientific men accept them and order their lives for eternity.

I suppose that the most vexing questions in

the whole problem of our immortality are: "How can the dead rise? What kind of a body will they have when they come back?"

We shrink from the thought of disembodied existence. So ardent a believer in immortality as St. Paul was did not welcome the idea of being even in heaven without some sort of body. He was not a materialist, but he was living a spiritual life in a body; and he hoped to continue his spiritual life in a spiritual world with some sort of a body. "For I know that if this earthly tent that I live in is taken down, God will provide me a building in heaven to live in, not built by human hands, but eternal. This makes me sigh with longing to put on my heavenly dwelling, for if I do, I shall never find myself disembodied. For I who am still in my tent sigh with anxiety, because I do not want to be stripped of it, but to put on the other over it, so that what is only mortal may be absorbed in life. It is God himself who has prepared me for this change, and he has given me the Spirit as his guaranty."

Scientists agree with Paul that a body is desirable and necessary to the proper development of the human spirit. Sir Oliver Lodge says: "It appears to be for the purpose of isolating us, isolating us from the great cosmic mass of spiritual existence to which we really

belong, but which for a time we are cut off from and embodied in the flesh. Bergson holds that the brain is an inhibiting instrument, blinding us to a certain amount of reality, isolating us so that we may become individuals, grow a character of our own, develop an individual self." If a body serves such a purpose in the beginning of our development, perhaps it is equally as necessary in our further development in a future world.

"Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal Soul from all beside."

This intimation of a new body must have been given to Paul by inspiration. He could not have worked it out by scientific processes, for there was no science in his day. However, it is interesting to find that many scientists of this day agree that a new and better body for man is in line with the whole series of evolutionary developments in the history of man. The New Testament doctrine of the three births and the three stages of human existence—physical birth, spiritual birth, and resurrection birth—is a revelation of the modern scientific hypothesis of evolution. In a series of addresses now being delivered in London, Sir Oliver Lodge expresses the belief that, as there are grades of existence below us, there are

grades of existence above us, "until you come to infinity, far beyond our conception." Another evolutionist says: "It is impossible to believe that the human body as we know it, the home of weakness and pain, and filled with the seeds of suffering and death, is the best that evolution can do. But the physical cannot come into its full heritage until it has become entirely subservient to the psychical. Evolution is from the lower to the higher. Man at first, by the necessities of the case, is dominated by the physical. There is nothing inherently wrong in matter, but it belongs to the lower order, and man cannot be perfected till the higher becomes dominant. The human body cannot become a perfect organism until it is controlled by spiritual forces."

Naturally this higher stage of development, prophesied by Scripture and believed in by the scientist, is unknown and mysterious to one still living in a lower stage. Mr. Fosdick, so well versed in both Scripture and science, uses a good illustration. "An unborn child, even though he were a philosopher, would have no easy time making clear to himself the facts of our earthly life. He lives without air; how can he live with it? He never saw light; how can he conceive it? He is absolutely dependent upon the cherishing environment in which he

finds himself, and he cannot well image himself living without it. The crisis of birth would seem like death to an unborn child, if he could foresee himself wrenched from all the conditions which have hitherto sustained his life."

"What kind of a body will they have?" While the scientists admit the reasonableness of the arguments for the immortality of the soul, and while they say that the Christian's expectation of a new and better body is in agreement with what they know of the processes of nature, they hesitate to speculate as to what kind of a body this will be. The Bible teachings are the boldest ventures on that subject, and they are in accord with the aspirations of the soul. In every way we have been able to test it, the Bible has been proved a book of truth concerning our highest and spiritual interests. Let us turn to its teachings concerning the future body.

It is a different body. We do not get back the body that returns to dust in the grave. When we lay it off, we are through with it forever. Both reason and scripture tell us that. Even if the new body is to be exactly like the present one, God is under no necessity of gathering up again the identical particles that compose this body and putting them into that.

He will preserve our identity, but not in this way.

The new body is to be a "spiritual body." To speak of a "spiritual body" may seem like using contradictory terms, for a spirit is without body or parts. When Paul speaks of the "natural body," he means the body of common flesh which is animated by carnal desires, subject to the weakness, disease, corruption, and all limitations of matter.

By a "spiritual body" he means a body of more highly refined substance, better suited to a higher order of living, and animated and sustained by spiritual energies rather than by physical desires. By processes at the command of the scientist, matter may be refined far beyond the coarse stuff that composes our present bodies. Solids may be turned into liquids, liquids into vapors, vapors into molecules, molecules into atoms, and each atom into thousands of electrons. When so refined matter is as invisible and elusive to our physical senses as spirit itself. So it is not scientifically foolish to think of a human body marvelously refined beyond the present body.

But that which will make the new body a "spiritual body" is the spiritual animation, control, and use to which it will be submitted. The earthly life will be passed, physical tasks

will be done, fleshly desires will have failed. The first body serves through all this earthly life. Heaven will be a different sort of a world. Jesus said that "after the resurrection there is no marrying or being married, but they live as angels do in heaven." The old earth question, "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink?" will not be asked. The insistent and uncontrollable clamors of the present body will not interfere with our high spiritual ambitions there as they do here. The heavenly life will be intellectual, moral, spiritual. The new body will be animated, controlled, and used by intellectual, moral, and spiritual energies rather than by physical; and that will make the new body a spiritual body. Even in this life we have suggestions and illustrations of that possibility. While some human bodies are so controlled by carnal desires that the very flesh is coarse and corrupt, others are so dominated and disciplined by the higher energies that they are wonderfully refined and almost spiritual.

The new body will differ from the old somewhat as the tall spire of living wheat differs from the little brown grain that was sown. The two bodies may be as much akin as the grain of wheat and the stalk of wheat. As every decaying seed gives way to a new body specific for its kind, so God promises that as

our old bodies perish he will give new bodies that will fit and identify our spirits as the old ones did. As we know the stalk of wheat to be the new incarnation of the soul of the grain, so the identity of our friends will not be lost in their new and superior bodies. "I shall know as fully as God knows me." According to this "grain of wheat" illustration, which is used by both Christ and Paul, the new body will be vastly superior to the old and will enjoy a far more abundant life.

Paul speaks of the present body as a "tent" and of the new body as a "building," thus asserting his belief that the new body will be more substantial and enduring than the present one. The highly refined material in it, the spiritual energies that sustain it, and the absence of the physical appetites from it will make it immune from disease and all the disintegrating forces that prey upon these bodies. So Paul did not expect another temporary tabernacle, but he expected an immortal house. There is to be no more death.

Paul says the new body "is raised in splendor." In another place he says, "He will make our poor bodies over to resemble his glorious body." He accepts the story that Jesus carried his resurrected body with him in the ascension; and as Jesus is his ideal in everything else, so

he takes him as his ideal in the resurrection. Paul had had a spiritual vision of the other world which was too splendid for description, and he conceives that the body of Jesus and the bodies of all those who shall be in the likeness of his resurrection will be fittingly beautiful and glorious.

“It is raised in strength.” The strength of our present bodies is not equal to the spiritual demands we often make upon them. Jesus found that to be the case with his own disciples. At a crisis, when they should have been watching and praying with him, they were asleep. Jesus apologized for them and forgave them with the words, “One’s spirit is eager, but flesh and blood are weak!” That will not be true of the new body. It will match an unfailing strength and efficiency with the high aspirations and enterprises of the immortal soul. The soul can depend upon the new body.

Paul’s doctrine is that the new body is a necessity to the efficiency and joy of the future life. “For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality.” If the present body is but poorly efficient in this brief, low, earthly life, how totally inadequate it would be in the eternal, high, heavenly life! If we knew the demands, opportunities, and possibilities of the

next world, we might undertake to estimate the powers and capabilities required in the bodies that are to accompany us through eternity; but all that is beyond our knowing or imagining. We can conceive that, as our present bodies are indispensable in the tasks of our earth life, so an adequate body will be a necessity in the eternal progressive achievements in the heavenly world. To take these poor bodies into the other world would be to continue in that world the carnality, weakness, disease, and misery that so mar life in this world. A higher life would be impossible. The ambitious soul there would continually utter Paul's earth cry: "What a wretched man I am! Who can save me from this doomed body?" So the power and wisdom and the goodness of God are seen in this thing we call death, which is only a divine process of taking off an inadequate body and putting on a new and eternally efficient body.

How do we get the new body? Yes, we can go on asking questions about this interesting matter. We can easily ask many questions that no man can answer and which God has not answered. As there was much to learn after we came into this world, so there will be much to learn after we get to the next world. We know but little about the body we now live

in, and we cannot be expected to know anything about the new body we shall have.

Maybe we shall build those new bodies ourselves. We built the bodies we now have. Matter cannot organize itself into a living body. The beginning of your life took hold of the first molecules of matter that went into the construction of your body and arranged them in place. Your life has continued to do that ever since; so that your life, your spirit, your self has built the body you now live in. It is not unreasonable that in some such mysterious way we may have a very responsible part in the fashioning of our new bodies.

As we have been dependent upon God and have been aided by him in the construction of the present body, so certainly we shall be dependent upon him and aided by him in the building of the new body. The task of building the new body does not seem any more unreasonable and impossible than the task already accomplished in the building of the present body. If our infant souls and the infinite Father could work together and build this body, why may not our grown-up souls and the better-known Father work together to build the new body? And why may they not do a better piece of work?

Paul believed that the moral and spiritual

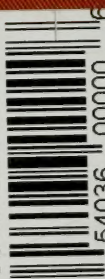
attainments of a soul will have a vast deal to do with the development of the glorious resurrection body. He was afraid to neglect his spiritual culture in the least, lest that might show up when he should try to put on the new body. He regarded the securing a glorious new body as the climax of spiritual attainments. Listen to these wonderful words in the third chapter of Philippians, "I want to know him in the power of resurrection, and to share his sufferings and even his death, in the hope of attaining resurrection from the dead."

In the eighth chapter of Romans he exhorts, "If you live under the control of the physical you will die, but if, by means of the Spirit, you put the body's doings to death, you will live." He was firmly convinced that living excessively for the gratification of the flesh is destructive of spiritual life and energy, and that a weak and inefficient soul would be at a disadvantage in trying to reincarnate itself for the new life and the new world. In the twenty-seventh verse of the ninth chapter of First Corinthians he says that he kept his body as his slave. He was afraid that the body's mastery of the soul would so wreck the soul that it would be fit for nothing but to be cast out; but he felt that if his soul could become accustomed to dominance and mastery over

this body it would develop power to put on and control a new body. In the fourth chapter of Second Corinthians he says, "Though my outer nature is wasting away, my inner is being renewed every day." He was conscious of a growth of soul, an increase of spiritual energy. Intellectually, morally, and spiritually he was still developing, while his body was gradually failing.

"Nay—but as when one layeth
His worn-out robes away
And taking new ones—sayeth,
'These will I wear to-day,'
So putteth by the spirit
Lightly its garb of flesh
And passeth to inherit
A fairer garb afresh."

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